The true Picture of Iohn Preston,
Dr. in Diuinity, and sometimes
Preacher of Lincolnes-Inn.

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THE ONELY LOVE OF THE CHIEFEST OF TEN THOUSAND:

OR

An heavenly Treatiſe of the divine Love of CHRIST:

SHEWING

1. The motives
2. The meanes
3. The markes
4. The kinds, &c.

} of our love towards him.

Delivered in five Sermons by Maſter *John Preſton*, Dr. in D. late Chaplaine to his Majeſtie, Mr. of Emanuel Colledge in Cambridge, and ſometimes preacher of Lincolnes Inne.

PSAL. 31. 26.
Love the Lord, O all yee his Saints, &c.
PSAL. 145. 20.
The Lord preſerveth all them that love him, and ſcattereth abroad all the ungodly.

LONDON,
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To the Reader of these pious and plaine Sermons, Grace, and Peace.

CHristian Reader, it was an old complaint of an Heathen, *that the noise of the old* Philosophers *opinions did hinder their dung-hill Gods from hearing their prayers: And it is no very new complaint of a* Christian, *that the many idle subtleties of the* Schoole *hath so drawne up* Divinity *to the highest pegge of a curious mind, that it*

hinders the heart from moulding it into Prayers *and* practice.

This grave and serious Divine, *whose living Sermons are here commended to thee when hee is dead, saw it with both eyes. Therefore though hee was no small master in subtleties, yet all his thoughts were bent to draw them downe from the floating braine, to the feeling heart; that his hearers might bee better brought to* know *and* doe. *As this hath beene his course in all his writings before extant; so is it in this, that now comes to thy hands. How might he have hid himselfe in the* thornes of speculation? *How high might he have flowne in the curious extracts of every word of this Text?*

Text? But he, that delighted to ſpeake ten words to edification, *rather then ten thouſand that could not pierce every ordinary braine, contented himſelfe* to fill up deep foards *to make them paſſable, and to wade the ſweet and ſhallow ſtreames of the love of the Lord Jeſus.*

He might from hence, have ſet himſelfe upon the mount of curſings, *and ſhowred downe worſe then fire and brimſtone upon delinquents: but the meekneſſe of his ſpirit carries him up to the mount of* bleſſings, *to learne good ſoules thorough death to find life, thorough threatnings to meete with comforts.*

He, being lifted up by the Divine love of Chriſt, *doth deſcribe love, and our* love to

Christ: *He soares to the* equity, *and* necessity *of it: Hee rests not before he have given you the* meanes, motives, marks, gaines, qualifications, *and* objects *of this love. How faine would he have thee* love the Lord Jesus, *that thou maiest avoid the* curse, *and enjoy the* blessing! *He knew nothing more necessary for a good Christian then this love. First, he must be a Christian by* faith; *next, hee must live a Christian by* faith *and* love *too: He can doe neither without the love of Christ to him; and this he can not have but in his time: he shall have* faith in Christ, *and* love to the Lord Jesus.

There is neither thing, *nor* love *in all the world more comfortable to a good man then this:*

this: Sin presseth hard downe and pulls him back from heaven; Satan baites both the hands, and hookes of the world, prosperity, *and* adversity, *to entangle him; Death brings him downe to the* bed of darkenesse, *the land of oblivion, and layes him up as a despised lumpe: But if he have* this love, *when all vanishing* bubbles *flie away; this mounts him up into the* bosome of God. *As water, bee it conveyed in Pipes never so low, yet in the same Pipes it will rise up as high as the Spring head: so this* love *springing from the bosome of* God, *though it bee shed abroad, and run thorough the* channels *of our hearts on earth, yet with a willing motion it mounts up to* Christ *againe, and carrieth us along*

with it in despite of stormes. Where wee love, *wee* live: *where wee* love, *we desire to bee; and* God *hath so ordered that this appetite shall not be in vaine.*

And as for other Loves, *see whether the* Love of the Lord Jesus, *doe not surpasse them all. Love other things, and yet often they slide away from thee, so that in them thou hast but a momentany joy: But love thy* Lord, *and, doing so, he* abides with thee for ever, *and is to thee a* spring of everlasting joy. *Love other things and they cannot know the sincerity of thy heart, how much, and in what manner and measure thou loveſt them: But love thy* Lord, *and he knowes better the love of thy heart then thy selfe: Thou maist say*

unto

unto him as did Peter, Thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee; *and ſhalt find intertainment anſwerable. Love other things and thou haſt vexing care over them both about their gaining, keeping, and loſing: But love thy* Lord, *and thy care is ſweet for him; yea,* hee careth for thee *in all thy wayes. Thou canſt loſe nothing by it, no not thy heart, which though it goe out to him, and he keepes it, yet he gives it to thee a-gaine, and that better then it was, to comfort thee in thy whole courſe.*

Love other things and thou findeſt not them at all times, nor ſo often as thou wouldſt: when thou haſt need thou canſt not ſpeake to them ſo often as thou wouldſt, neither doe they hearken

hearken to thy words as thou couldst wish: But love thy Lord, *and* he is with thee alwaies to the end of the world: *Thou maiest speake to him at any time, by night, or by day; he heareth thee at all times and* gives thee thy hearts desires. *Love other things and thou canst not know their secrets; there may be something in them which may be vexations unto thee in the issue; there may lye a snake under the greene grasse, a filthy toade under a sweet flowre, and a worm, in the heart of a desired apple. But love thy* Lord *and he will reveale the* mystery of Godlinesse, *and his* hidden secrets *of truth unto thee according to his word; yea, thou shalt see that nothing but that which is glorious in it selfe, and good*

good for thee, is either in him, or about him.

Love other things and they put thee to many a trouble; they hinder thee in thy prayers, and all thy service to God, because thou dost alwaies think, and dote upon them: But love thy Lord *and he bringeth into thy heart and conscience,* peace which passeth all understanding. *The more thou lovest him when thou praiest, the more hee gives thee to thy selfe; yea, the more he gives thee to himselfe, and fills thee with holy comfort. Love other things and they are without thee still; thou canst never bring them to any more intimate communion, save that which is common to thee with Epicures: But love thy* Lord *and he* dwelleth in thee, and thou

thou in him. *for* he is Love.

Love other things and they seeke at thy hands a profit and gaine to themselves, or else they perish in thy love. They will take advantage upon thy love to worke upon thee for their owne perfections: But love thy Lord, *and he seeks thy profit and perfection: he alwayes endures to glorifie himselfe in doing thee good. Love other things, and most times they will deceive thee, they are often lyars, variable, and inconstant: But love thy* Lord *and thou shalt be assured: hee is most true, and unchangeable, and thou maist build upon him that* hee will not faile thee nor forsake thee.

Love other things, and oft-

times

times they cauſe griefe, and heavineſſe, and ſo doe highly diſpleaſe thee: But love thy Lord *and it baniſheth feare and ſad* confuſion of face, *becauſe thou canſt ſee nothing in him that can diſpleaſe thee. Laſtly, love other things, and thou knoweſt not aſſuredly whether thou art loved of them againe: But love thy* Lord, *and thou maiſt bee aſſured that hee anſwereth thee with the ſame, yea, with better; for he cannot but love a bleſſed child of the* beget-ting of his owne will.

By how much more excellent this love is then the love of all things elſe, by ſo much the more muſt thou preſſe to enjoy and practice it. Every thing naturally deſires that which is beſt for it.

it. If it have it not, it is from the errour about the object, or the miſcariage of the appetite. That therefore thou maieſt faile in neither, but maieſt have the beſt object, and the beſt appetite cleared from clouds of ignorance and ſinne unto thee, theſe five Sermons of an experienced maſter in Iſrael *are tendred unto thee. If thou reapeſt benefit by them, give glory to* God, *who would not have this lampe of love* kept under a buſhel, *and buried in oblivion. If thou receiveſt the leaſt encouragement, from theſe foregoing lines, to make uſe of this light, know that they proceede from the love of thee in* Chriſt, *in him, who*

who desires thy prayers, that hee may love the Lord Jesus *both in life and death.*

Farewell.

To

SERMON I.

1 Cor. 16.22.

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha, Let him be had in execration, or let him be excommunicated unto the death.

THese words have little dependance on the words before going; which are these, *The salutation of me* Paul *with my owne hands.* It was the custome of the Apostle, that the Church might not be deceived with coun-

counterfeit Epistles, to set his name to those he wrote: And that he would not doe alone, but did alwayes adde some gracious sentence, as commonly this, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* And there he addes that sentence, which so suits with the spirit and mind of S. *Paul*, that it might easily shew it to be S. *Pauls* Epistle; a man so abounding in the love of the Lord, as hee is zealous against such as love him not. Wee shall finde, in all S. *Pauls* preaching, that faith and love, were that which he drave at; those two roots, those two pillars on which the Church is built, from whence all the rest flow: Hereby teaching Ministers what they should beat

beat at, what ſhould bee their aime: And ſo people are taught hence what to do: they muſt water theſe two roots well, and then the branches will flouriſh. Our wiſdome ſhould be to look to theſe; for theſe being ſtrong, all will be ſtrong: If theſe be weake, all will be weak. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus, let him be had in execration; yea, accurſed unto the death.* His ſcope is to commend love to the *Corinthians.* If I ſhould caſt about me to commend ſome ſpeciall thing unto you now at the cloſing up of my Epiſtle, I know nothing better then this *Love of the Lord Jeſus.* And there are two reaſons why you ſhould love him, firſt yee were in a miſerable and accurſed condition

dition if you doe it not. And the second is from the the object you are to love, he is *the Lord* and so may well challenge your love; *Jesus your Saviour*, and so hath well deserved it: so that we have here an exhortation, and two reasons of it. The words have little difficulty. Somewhat I will say of the two words in the originall *Anathema* and *Maranatha*. The word *Anathema* signifies the separation of a thing unto destruction. *Maranatha* is a Syrian word, signifying curſing; taken from the Hebrew root, and it signifies more then *Anathema*. The Apostle doubles this curse to shew the greatnesse of the punishment. It is a great punishment which hee

hee would expreſſe in two languages. The generall doctrine wee will obſerve from theſe words, is this, *That to love the Lord Jeſus is ſo neceſſarily required of us, that he is worthy to be curſed that doth it not.* Sometimes in Scripture the promiſe is made to faith, ſometimes to repentance, ſometimes to love. Love is ſo required, that without it, a man is worthy to bee accurſed; yea, and ſhall be curſed. I will but open and apply this; not ſtanding to prove it. And Firſt, I will ſhew what love is in generall: Secondly, what this love of the Lord Jeſus is; to ſhew which there will bee ſhowne how it is wrought: And thirdly, how they come to bee worthy to bee

be accurſed, that love him not. And firſt for the firſt Love is among the affecti-ons, which are planted in the Will; and it may be de-ſcribed thus, *It is a diſpoſiti-on of the Will and Heart of man, whereby it turnes and inclines to ſome good, which it apprehends to be agreeable to its own nature.* The Will is carried to nothing, but that which is apprehended to be good. Now this love is a principall act of the Will; and it muſt bee an agreeable good to him, whoſe Will inclines unto it; for an en-vious man may confeſſe the excellencies of another man, but hee hates them; he ſuf-fers by them; they ſeeme not to bee an agreeable good to him. And this may bee illuſtrated

What love is in gene-rall.

illustrated by the contrary. Hate is that whereby a man turns from a thing which he apprehends contrary to himself. This Love shews it self in two effects: first, it desires the preservation of what it loves, that it it may be kept safe: secondly, it desires Vnion with it, that they may draw neerer one to another. That you love, which you desire may be yours, with which you desire conjunction: Now sometimes a thing may be neerer, sometimes too far off; therefore it desires such a neerenesse as may stand with its convenience. And this is common to all love; if you love a Glasse, you will take care that it be kept clean, and

How love shews it self.

whole, and for your uſe: ſo, if you love a Horſe, you will take care that he be well, and in good caſe, and that he be yours. The ſame we ſee in the love of a Father to his Sonne, of one friend to another. This is the nature of Love. Now Hate, contrariwiſe, deſires the deſtruction of that which is hated, that it may be taken out of the world; and if that cannot be, it deſires ſeparation from it, as far as may be. And thus you have ſeen the nature of Love in generall. Now there are divers kindes of Love: There is *a Love of Pity*, when you deſire the preſervation of a mans perſon, and the removing of ſome ill quality; As, our Saviour

The kinds of Love.

viour mourned in Spirit, for the hardnes of their heart; he did pity them, and yet was angry with their sin.

There is *a Love of Desire*, when a thing is desired to be kept safe for our use: And this is for the inferiour faculties, as the sight loves a pleasant object should be continued.

3 There is *a Love of Complacence*, when we look on a thing, in which all the faculties are pleased; not only the inferiour, but the superiour, as the Minde and the Will.

4 There is *a love of friendship* when a man loves where he is loved again, when love is reciprocall; there is an intercourse of Love.

There is *a Love of Depen-*

dance, when we love him on whom we depend; and thus we love God, when we look upon him, as on whom all our good depends: so that we love him more than our selves, because our good depends upon him, more than on our selves.

1 The qualities of Love. We will adde the qualities of Love; there is a *naturall Love*, planted in us by nature: as the love of parents to their children, of one man to another: this love is indifferent, not good in it self; good no otherwise, than directed on a a good object.

2 There is a *sinfull Love*, arising from sinfull habits, which seek things convenient to it. As nothing is better than love on a right object,

ject, ſo nothing worſe than love on a wrong object. As naturall Love puts us in the condition of men: ſo this ſinfull Love makes men worſe than beaſts, and equals them with the Devil.

3 There is a *ſpirituall Love*, ariſing out of holy qualities, which ſeeks an object agreeable to it. And this makes a man above a man, and in ſome ſort equall with the Angels. Men are as they love. GOD judges us by our affections, we are judged by what we love. He that loves wickedneſſe, is truly a wicked man; he that loves holineſſe, is truly holy. This foundation that we have laid, though it may ſeem ſomewhat remote, yet ye ſhall finde it of uſe to

hold up this building, before we have done with the point.

2 What this love of the Lord Jesus is.

The second thing that we have to declare, is, What this love of the Lord Jesus is. Now the best way to shew what this is, is to shew how it is wrought: now for the working of it, there must be two Antecedent things which must make way for it; and they are *Humiliation* and *Faith*: for every one beleeves not this to be needfull; and if they do beleeve it, yet they may be opposite to it, because it is not agreeable to their nature, That a man must be broken so, and moulded again before he can have this love which is wrought by Humiliation and Faith.

And

And they are wrought on this maner, when we preach the Goſpel, and offer *Ieſus Chriſt* unto you: for the duty of a Miniſter, is nothing but this, *to offer Ieſus Chriſt* himſelf unto the world. *To us a Childe is born; To us a Son is given:* for, *unto you is born a Saviour, that is, Chriſt the Lord.* This is the ſum of the Goſpel; this is the news which we bring: God hath given us his Son; we offer you not forgiveneſſe of ſin, but the Lord Jeſus. And when he hath *given us him, will he not with him give us all things alſo?* Chriſt muſt firſt be given, and when you have him, you ſhall have all: in him are *the promiſes, yea and Amen.* Firſt have Chriſt, and

Eſa. 9.
Luke 2.
Ioh. 3.16.
Rom. 8.
2 Cor. 1. 20.

and then the promises belong unto you, not before. The Gospel is nothing but this; we are to manifest, that God the Father is willing to give you his Son. We are his Spokesmen, *to beseech you* to take him, that you would take him as your husband, to be ruled by him: none, before you are humbled, can marry you to Christ. You must be divorced from all other things, and beleeve that Christ will take you; and this is Faith, the other Humiliation. And then when you can receive him, you will love him. Now when we preach thus unto the world, what answer do we finde? Why, there are some that will not beleeve that there is

2 Cor. 5.

is ſuch a Lord: and then our work is to perſwade, that Chriſt is ſuch a Lord; and this was the Apoſtles work, and theirs at the beginning. But when we intreat you to take Chriſt for your Lord, your anſwer is, as theirs who were invited to the feaſt. This, and this excuſe they have to hinder them, to beleeve, that a Chriſt is propounded, and men regard him not; they will not look after him. Now, that Chriſt may be received, there is required Humiliation and Faith: Humiliation opens their eyes, by the Law, and ſpirit of bondage, that they ſee themſelves miſerable men, men condemned to dy. Now when God hath diſcovered our

misery unto us, and wee rightly apprehend what our estates are, then we begin to look on Christ as a condemned malefactour on his pardon; as a Captain on him that comes to redeem him; as a Widow that thought she should live well enough alone, but now when all her goods are seized upon, and they are now to carry her to prison, would be content if any one would marry her. When a man shall see what he is without Christ, one that is condemned, that must perish if he have him not; then he looks on Christ, as upon one most desirable, to prize him, to thirst for him; and if he know that Christ will then receive him, oh then he

he cannot but love him; for Love(as hath been said) is to a good apprehended fit for us. Now without this, we will think of Christ, as if we might be well enough without him: But when the heart is thus prepared by Humiliation, oh that all the World would vanish for Christ! Then comes the Gospel, and tels us that Christ is willing to take us, to redeem us, to be ours. And then when we take him, the match is made up: and thence arises this *conjugall Love.* The Apostle prays for the Ephesians, that *Christ may dwell in their hearts by Faith,* Ephes. 3. to unite them to Christ, to marry him; then presently it follows, *That ye may be rooted*

rooted and grounded in Love: ſo that Love follows this, and not a flaſh, but it roots us in Love. The act of juſtifying Faith, is the taking of Chriſt for reſt. Now when ye have taken him thus, then you will love him, and then all that follows will be effects of this love: ſo that this love of the Lord Jeſus, is this; to wit,

A holy diſpoſition, ariſing from Faith, whereby wee cleave unto the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, with full purpoſe of heart, to ſerve and pleaſe him in all things.

Whereby we cleave to him. Love inclines, and knits our hearts to him, as it did *Davids* to *Ionathans*

thans. And ſo *Barnabas* exhorted them to *cleave unto the Lord with full purpoſe of heart, Act.* 11. Neither is this idle, but makes a man deſirous to pleaſe the Lord in al things. A man is ſaid to love the Lord, when out of a perſwaſion that Chriſt is moſt deſirable, and willing to receive him, he cleaves to the Lord with a deſire to ſerve and pleaſe him in all things. Faith that begets Love, is not onely a perſwaſion that the Lord will be mercifull, and forgive us: (For a priſoner may ſee the Judge willing to pardon him, and perſwade himſelf that he ſhall be pardoned, and yet love not the Judge, becauſe he looks not on the Judge, as on an amiable perſon)

perſon;) but a receiving and reſting upon his amableneſſe. There is another affection; when the heart is ſo framed, it apprehends Chriſt for its onely good, its happineſſe. Faith is not onely an act of the minde, to beleeve that God will pardon us; but of the Will and heart alſo, to take Chriſt for our Husband; ſo that all the parts of the heart are inclined and bent after him. *If you beleeve with all your heart*, ſaith *Philip* to the Eunuch, *Act.* 8. If a Spouſe ſhould ſee one willing to have her, that is not enough to make up the match; ſhe may not think him fit, ſhe may be unwilling. But ſuppoſe there be one that ſhe loves above all,

whom

whom she thinks to be most fit for her, yea she thinks she shall be undone if she have him not: but yet she is not sure that he will have her, but thinks it is very probable that he may be induced unto it. So this is Faith, when a man sees Christ onely worth his love, he would gladly be divorced from all, so that he might have Christ, oh he cannot be without him, yet there is somewhat betwixt them, he cannot firmly beleeve that Christ loves him, but yet doth not think that he is wholly averse from him. Though thy perswasion be not full, yet if you have this thirst and desire, this hungering after Christ, you may be comforted

forted. This ſhuts out ſuch as have a perſwaſion of the pardon of their ſins, and yet have not this love, this prizing, this deſiring after Chriſt; and takes in ſuch as do thus love and prize him, yet finde not that full perſwaſion of his love; ſo that this love is that which follows Humiliation and Faith, the breaking of the heart, and the moulding of it up again: when we ſee our need of him, and his willingneſſe to receive us, then we will take him, which cannot be without this love to him.

3 Why they are worthy to be curſed that love not the Lord Jeſus.

Now we come to the third thing, the reaſons why they are worthy to be accurſed unto the death that Love not the Lord Jeſus.

This

This may seeme strange and harsh. What then becomes of all unregenerated men? The Apostle means, sure, such as continue in their not loving the Lord, or such as have sinned against the holy Ghost. But the former sence I take to be the best, neither is this any strange thing: for it is one part of the Gospel. There are two parts of the Gospel, *If you beleeve, you shalbe saved; if you beleeve not, you shalbe damned.* Sometimes it is if you repent you shalbe saved; or if you do not you shall perish, so if you love you shalbe saved; if you love not, you shalbe accursed: now why should he pitch on such a frame of words to expresse their condition?

Mark 16.

Because

Reason 1. Because when Christ shall come and be a suter to us, when he shall woe us, and offer himselfe to us, and we will have none of him, then Psal. 2. *the son waxes angry.* When he shall offer himselfe unto us, and none will kisse him, then he waxes angry unto the death, and they perish in the way. The greatest love not answered, turns to the greatest hatred: so when the Father sent to call them Mat. 22. to the feast that were invited, and they refused it, this made him wrath; when we shall come to preach Christ to men when this light hid from the beginning of the world shall shine, and you shall despise it and contemn it, know that now is the axe laid to the root of the tree.

God

God will beare it at your hands no longer. Now if a man will not Love the Lord Jeſus, let him be had in execration, yea let him bee accurſed unto the death.

If a man did not keep the Law, he was to be curſed, now there was a double keeping of the Law: A *Legall*, which anſwers the exact rigour of the Law; an *Evangelicall*, which is an earneſt endeavouring to keep the Law, and to make a mans heart as perfect as may be. Now there being more mercie in this, there is a greater curſe on the breach of it. Now Love is the fulfilling of the Law; and not to love the Lord, is, not to keep the Law, and 2

and therfore the Curſe follows it.

3 If a man love not the Lord Jeſus, it is becauſe he loves ſomething better than him. It may be you love your Wealth more than Chriſt: And are you not worthy to be curſed for it? It may be you are lovers of pleaſure more than of God, and doth not this deſerve a Curſe? It may be you love the praiſe of men, before that of God; & is not this to be accurſed? Adultery was puniſhed with death; and what puniſhment then is enough for the going a whoring from ſuch a God, after ſuch vanities?

4 Again, Curſing belongs to Hypocrites; *Wo be unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypo-*

Hypocrites, Matthew 23. Now, what a man doth not out of love, is done out of hypocriſie; which is, to do the outward action without the inward affection: as counterfeit gold hath the ſame ſtamp and colour with true gold. But as we caſt away counterfeit ſilver and gold, ſet it apart to deſtruction, nayling them up, that they may be known, ſo will God deal with ſuch as ſerve him outwardly, vvithout this love to him.

Love is that which commands all in a man. It is as the rudder to a ſhip; all follows love. When a man loves not the Lord, all go's from him. Now when the whole man ſhall go from the Lord, is not ſuch a one wor-

worthy to be curſed, yea to be had in execration to the death?

Vſe 1. It is a great ſin, not to love the Lord Ieſus.

If this love of the Lord be ſo neceſſary, then ſee what a ſin it is, what an execrable thing it is, not to love the Lord; and what you are to think of your ſelves, if you love not the Lord. When Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be propounded unto men, and this light is great, but men do reſiſt it, and not embrace the Lord: when we ſee this, we ſhould have ſuch a ſpirit as *Paul*, (for this was out of the abundance of his zeal) we ſhould, I ſay, *be ſtirred* againſt ſuch with an holy indignation, *Act.* 17. *Do not I hate thoſe that hate thee?* Pſal. 139. yea I hate them with

with a perfect hate. *This thou haſt, that thou hateſt the works of the Nicholaitans, which thing alſo I hate*, Revelations 2. And this was a ſign of *Lots* ſincerity, that his righteous ſoul was grieved, and *vexed with the unclean converſation of the Sodomites*, 2 Peter 2. If you can ſee Chriſt ſcorned and rejected, and his Word ſlighted, and *his bloud trampled on*, and you your ſelves are not moved with it, you are not of *Pauls* ſpirit, who ſpeaking of ſome, *whoſe God was their belly, whoſe glory was their ſhame; of whom* (ſaith he) *I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the croſſe of Chriſt*, Philip. 3. Whence came

came this, but out of the abundance of his love to Christ, and mankinde? I wish ye would all look to your selves, whether you are in this number or not, of those that love not the Lord. This is such a sin, as the curse is doubled upon it: And the punishment is but to shew the measure of the sin. He thunders not out his curse against him that opposeth the Lord, or resisteth him, but against him that loveth not the Lord. The Apostle, as *Moses*, gets him up to the *Mount Ebal*; and whom doth he curse? Even all such as love not the Lord Jesus. This Doctrine throughly considered, may let in a crevice of light to thee, that now thou maist

maist look on thy self, as on an execrable thing which God hates; and thou maist see GOD, even stretching out his power to confound thee, yea thou maist see the Gospel cursing thee.

But what terrour is there in the preaching of the Gospel, you will say? *Ob.*

O much more (my Brethren) than may be expressed; for the curse of the Law was not so peremptory; though we have plain words for it, yet it was not without all condition. But God swears to this curse, as if we were thus cursed if we would continue not to love him. The Law is the proper instrument of humbling, yet the Gospel *Sol.*

humbles more; for sin is the matter of Humiliation. And there be sins against the Gospel, yea greater sins than against the Law: when thou heareſt the curse of the Law, *Cursed be he that continueth not in every thing that is written in the book of the Law, to do them*, Galathians 3. You will say, you will go to Christ, and he shall do it for you: But when the Gospel curses such as love not Christ, to whom will you go to love God? Another man cannot love for you. And if you think this be too harsh, let this verse sound oft in your ears,

If any man love not the Lord Iesus Christ, let him be accurſed unto the death.

This

This cannot be altered, it is the Word of God; ask then thy self this question, Whether thou lovest the Lord, or no? And put not your self off with your Hope, but try your Love; for Love will have sensible strings in the heart; it will drive you close to the Lord, to keep in with him, to have communion with him.

Signes of Love. 1

Dost thou then feel, that thou art never well, but when thou art with him, and yet dost thou not love him? Dost thou walk with God, as *Enoch* did? will any of you say, that a Wife loves her Husband, which with her good will, will never be with him?

2

Love is also very diligent

and laborious, you will never leave, till you get neer him whom you love; no labour will be tedious, to get his favour; many yeers seem a few daies to *Iacob*, to serve for *Rachel*, because he loved her.

3 Again, Love is not of a deferring nature, but is impatient of all delays.

4 Again, Love is content with it self; it doth not need to be hired to love, *Amor est sibi ipsi dulce pabulum*: it carries its meat in its own mouth. If you love the Lord Jesus, you would not ask what wages you should have to love him.

5 Again, Love is a strong impulsive quality, it carries you on impetuously unto the Lord; it is a fire that breaks

breaks through thick and thin: so that he that loves, cannot sin wilfully, if he would; hee cannot but obey, he cannot do any thing against the Gospel, he must do all things for it. *The love of Christ constrains me*, saith Saint *Paul*, 2 *Corinthians* 5. Look how a man is carried with a strong stream, or by a strong man whom he cannot resist; so his love compelled him; I preach, and preach, and men think me mad, but I cannot but do it: the love of Christ constrains me, & as it constrains me, so there is nothing more different than constraint, and not to do it. The effects of this Love are so violent, as if they

were compelled; but for the manner of working, nothing is so contrary to it as compulsion; for you love him, and are carried to it, as a stone to the center, you would do no otherwise.

So endeth the first SERMON.

THE

The Onely

LOVE,

OR,

The Chiefest

OF

Ten Thousand.

Sermon II.

BY

IOHN PRESTON,

D. D.

LONDON,
Printed for *Iohn Stafford,*
1640.

The Only

LOVE:

Or, The Chiefest

Plan Printed.

SERMON II.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

If any man love not the Lord Iesus Christ, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accurſed unto the death.

THat love to the Lord Jeſus is ſo neceſſarily required, that he is worthy to be curſed that hath it not.

Point.

Then hence you are to conſider your condition, and

Vſe 2. Try whether what you do is out of love

and to examine your ſelf; it may be this is thy condition, and it may be a thing you never conſidered of, or at leaſt you never knew the danger of it. Therfore now ſee what your cauſe is. The beſt ſervice we can do to you, is to ſhew you your eſtates, if ye be right, to comfort you; and if ye be not right, is it not beſt for ye to know while it may be amended? Thou that liveſt in the Church, and haſt gone far, examine thy ſelf in this, Haſt thou done all out of Love? Thou haſt kept thy ſelf in good courſe: thou keepeſt the Lords day, and liveſt like a Chriſtian, thou doeſt many things indeed. But let me ask thee this queſtion, Do you

you all out of love? for without love all is naught. If a man ſhould be a Martyr, (which is the higheſt action;) yet without this love, it were to no purpoſe, 1 *Corinthians* 13. Put the caſe a man ſhould do many things for thee, yet if he do it not out of love to thee, you cannot regard it; *Neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion avails any thing, but faith which works by love*, Galathians 5. It is all one, whether you pray or not, hear or not, live well or not, if it be not out of love. What was ſaid of circumciſion or uncircumciſion, may be ſaid of any duty; all that you have done, is as nothing, if it be not out of love: try your ſelves

selves by this, for I know not in all the frames of Theology, such a touch-stone of Hypocrisie as this. This most unmasks a man of any thing. As it was with the Apostle, *The Law revived, and he died*, Romans 7. So, it may be you have thought your self a living man; see then if you love, deceive not your self any longer. This is a Doctrine of much moment; if GOD would conveigh it with Majesty, by the power of his spirit, it would amaze and startle the stoutest stomack to hear, *Cursed is he that loves not the Lord.* If you love the Lord, he will bear much with you: see what a testimony he gives of *David*, for all his failing.

But

But do what you will for him, without love, and he will regard it but as a Complement. As men count that a Complement not to be regarded, with which the heart go's not, so doth God: look therefore that you love the Lord Jesus, for it is a thing of great consequence, the curse follows you if you do it not. You are now therefore to examine your self, Whether you love or no? And to help you in it, I will lay down some marks of this love; but first set down with your self this conclusion, *If I love not the Lord Iesus, I am an accursed man.*

Notes of triall of this love of the Lord Christ.

Do you feel this love in you? have you a sence of it?

I.

it? *Amnon* was sick of love, so that his friends could see him wear away: so the Spouse, *I am sick of love*, Canticles 2. And dost thou love the Lord, and canst not feel it? Dost thou feel thy heart working towards God? This love is a thing that one would think needs no marks, you cannot but see it. It is noted in Love, so, that if you did love the Lord, you would have a longing desire after him: there will be joy in the fruition of him, anger against all impediments to it, grief when he withdraws himself, hope when there is any probability of enjoying him, fear to lose him. Now do not deceive thy self; thou lovest the Lord, thou wilt

wilt ſay, but is this love *to his perſon*, or *to his kingdome*, his goods? When thou preſenteſt Jeſus Chriſt alone to thy ſelf, canſt thou then love him? *The Virgins love him, the Harlots love him.* And there is a great deal of harlotry love in the world, to the Lord Jeſus. It was one thing to love *Alexander*, another to love the King. It is true, Chriſt is a great King, that can do much good or evill in the world, and ſo many may love him. But canſt thou anſwer this queſtion, *Loveſt thou me?* with *Peter*, *Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee*, Joh. 20. Thou that knoweſt my heart, and the ſecret turnings of it, canſt bear me witneſſe that I love *thee*. Doeſt

Doeſt thou love his company? Love is ſeen in nothing more than this. Doeſt thou love his preſence, to walk with God? Doeſt thou obſerve all his dealings to thee from morning to night, refer all ſtill unto him? Art thou ſtill in dealings with him? Still thou haſt ſomething to do with him; there is not an hour that paſſes thee, wherein thou haſt not recourſe unto him: when Chriſt takes a man unto himſelf, *he comes and ſups with him*, Apocalypſe 3. Haſt thou then this communion with Chriſt? Doth he ſup with thee, dwell with thee? Now, communion ſtands in ſpeaking to another, and in hearing him ſpeak to us. When you

you pray, then pray you formally, as one that is glad when the duty is over? oh if you loved the Lord, you would never be better, than when you are at prayer. And you would go to prayer, as you would go to speak with your dearest friend. So do you hunger after the Word, which is the character of Christ his will, his Love-letter? Put the case a Woman should have her husband at the East-Indies, how welcome would a Letter be to her from him? Therefore *Moses* that loved God, *desired to see his glory*, Exodus 33. to know him better, to grow more acquainted with him. Now, that the Word doth to thee; it shews to thee

thee that glory which *Moſes* ſaw. If you love the Lord, Holy-daies and Sacrament-daies would be as Feaſt-daies, and Wedding-daies; for then you meet with God more neerly. Do you then put off your coming to the Sacrament, and would you not come neer it for the ſpeech of ſome, and yet will you ſay that you love the Lord? where love is, there is delight. A man delights in his fellowſhip, whom he loves, whom ye have not ſeen, yet ye love him; yea, whom, though ye ſee him not, yet ye beleeve, and joy with joy unſpeakable and glorious. Do you then delight in his preſence? for delight will be in the injoying of that we love;

love; joy follows love. To delight in a mans company, is that mark of love which cannot be dissembled. Dost thou then love *the appearing of the Lord Iesus?* 2 Thessalonians 3. If one should bring you news that you must go to the Lord, or he would come to you to morrow, would this be acceptable news to you? Doth he bring good tidings? If a Spouse should have her betrothed husbād beyond the Seas, and should hear of his return; if she should say that it were the worst news that could come to her, would you think that she lov'd him? No, there could not come a more welcome Messenger to thee than such a one, if

Rev.13.

if thou didst love the Lord, *Blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord (for so saith the Spirit) from henceforth they rest from their labours.* So saith the Spirit, not so saith the Flesh. So much the more spirit a man hath, so much the more he will say, it is blessed, and the more he will pray submittingly for it, quickly. Indeed a godly man, when the flesh is predominate, and the spirit under hatches, then he may be desired to be spared a while; oh spare me a little, as a Spouse may sometimes wish her Husband, deferring his coming, when she is not fit to receive him; the house is not ready, not clean enough. *A Crown of Righteousnesse,*

saith the Apostle, *is laid up for all them that love the appearing of the Lord Iesus*. 1 Timothy 4. 8. And *the second time shall Christ appear to salvation, to all them that look for him*, Hebrews 9. Art thou then one that looks for Christ, that desires nothing but union with him, he will come to thee to thy salvation. If men look not for him, will he come to them to salvation? It may be in some disease, when thou canst take no pleasure in the World, you wish that you were with Christ. Nature may have a great hand in this. But in thy youth, in the midst of all worldly contents, when thou art in thy pleasant Orchard, with thy Wife and Chil-

Children about thee, having what thy heart can wish; canst thou say then, Now would I most willingly leave all these to go to Christ? when you prefer his company above all things, count that delight the best, that comes from communion with him; then thou lovest the *Lord Iesus.*

3 Love is exceeding bountifull, apt to do much for the Lord, and to suffer any thing gladly. The Apostle, in the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chapter 13. sets down many excellent properties of Love; the that loved Christ, had a box of Oyntment; it may be it was the best thing she had, it may be it was all she had, yet she bestows it on Christ.

Christ. So *Abraham*, when God would have his Son, he go's willingly about it, not formally, not out of necessity, but he rose up early to do it. It may be there will come a time when God shall need thy Wealth; it may be, when thy Credit. Now, you can deny him nothing, if you love him. So, *Dalilah* would not be perswaded that *Sampson* loved her, so long as he kept back any thing from her. If there be any thing so neer unto thee as thy life, and it be told thee that the Lord hath need of it, he shall have it. Thou wilt say, It was a wise action of *David*, to pour out that water as an offering to the Lord, which

he ſo longed for, and obtained with the hazard of the lives of three of his Worthies. As when a man hath a good bit, he will ſend it to his friend: ſo in another place, *he would not offer to the Lord of that which ſhould coſt him nothing*, 2 Samuel 24. But what can I beſtow upon the Lord, thou wilt ſay? If thou art a Preacher, preach the Goſpel for Chriſt; ſo, every man in his calling, let him do ſomewhat for the Lord, and if he ſhall call for thy life, let it not be dear unto thee. And as love is thus bountifull, ſo it *ſeeks not its own*, 1 Corinthians 13. And now, how few will be found that love Chriſt? we may well complain

plain with *Paul*, *All men seek their own, and none the things of Jesus Christ*, Philemon 2. *Paul* that loved the Lord, how was he affected? he regarded not himself, took not care what should become of himself, he took the care of all the Churches upon him: *Who is offended*, and so by taking offence, fals away, *and I burn not?* Art thou a Minister, and lovest the Lord Jesus, thou wilt not be so carefull for a living, and that it be a convenient one, but thou wouldest preach as *Paul*, though for nothing; for every man might do much for the Lord, if he sought the things of the Lord; if he did plot with himself, how to bring ad-

vantage to Christ. And then if this should come in, if I do this, I shall hinder my estate, lose my friends, it would be nothing: the love of the Lord would be far better to thee than any thing. Love doth much for the Lord; Faith works by Love, he loves much, that doth much. *Paul*, as he was abundant in love, so *in labour*. If *you love me*, saith our Saviour, *keep my commandements*. Are you willing then to take much pains for the Lord? Doest thou feed the lambs of Christ? if thou art a Minister, or if thou art in the way to that calling, art thou diligent to fit thy self for it? And love not onely works, but it makes that *the commandements*

mandements are not grievous. The wife may serve her husband, & the servant him, but with a different affection. The covetous man when he is before some great man that can imprison him, or put him to death may part with his wealth; or if with one that can greatly preferre him, in hope of that, hee may be brought to part with his money; But willingly he will not. But you must find delight in that you doe: when you do a kindnesse to one that you love, you doe but doe your selfe a kindnesse on that party. And in in this sense what thanks deserve you? you doe but satisfie your love. As a mother loves her childe,

and doth the offices of kindneſſe to it with delight, though ſhe ſhall never have any thing for it. If you had this love, you would come to ſay, *It is meate and drinke to doe your Fathers will.* Now, you need not be hired to eate and drinke. Laſtly, *love ſuffers all things.* Are you willing to ſuffer for the Lord? when *David* did a religious act, *Michol* lookes upon him with an other eye, as men looke now on religious actions. It is no matter, ſaith *David*, I will bear it, for I did it to the Lord, who choſe me before thy fathers houſe. And if this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile. Can you endure to be pointed at, ſcoffed and mocked, for the

Iohn 4.

1 Cor. 13.

the Lord? It was a sore triall to have his wife so against him, yet we see how he did beare it. *Bonds and afflictions*, saith *Paul, abide me in every citie*; But none of these things move me, *neither count I my life deare unto my selfe, so I may finish my course with joy.* Are you able to doe thus? But I cannot like, you will say, to be put to it, you doe not know, it may be you may lose your wealth, your credit, and respect, among those whom you loved, and and this is somewhat: yet love makes it as nothing. We see when a man loves a Maide, neither Father nor friend, nor the speech of people will move him to give over. True, this is a

Acts 20. 24.

sinfull love, but yet shewes what the nature of love is.

Col. 1 11. Nay, I will go further, you will suffer all with joy, *Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and and long suffering with joyfulnesse.* So when the Apostles were whipt where the shame was more then

Acts 5. the paine, yet they rejoyced that they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ.

Put all these together, Are ye bountifull, that if the Lord should put you to any cost, cost of purse, labours of life, he should willingly have it? Doe ye take care for the things of Christ, plot how ye may glorifie him? Do ye doe much, and suffer much for the

the Lord? Take theſe notes no further then yee ſee reaſon for them: And know that this is that word of the Lord, if you love not the Lord Ieſus, you are curſed.

The next property of love is, it deſires nothing ſo much as love againe. If a man be ſerviceable to another, and not out of love ſo he be officious to him, he is content. But love will be paid in it's own coyne, it will not have mercy without grace. A kingdome without grace, will not content it. It is very obſervant in this kinde, *Quis fallere poſſit amantem?* They will be very curious this way. They muſt ſee love in every thing, or elſe they can take no delight in it. It is not a 4

kingdome that can quiet them without the love of God. How ever it goe with corne, wine and oyle, their
Psal.4. prayer is, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance on us.* If a mans turne were ſerved, ſo he might be freed from hell, and made happy, and then love him, this man loves not the Lord. That which *Abſalom* did in hypocriſie, we are to doe in truth, 2 *Sam.*14. *What avails it me that* I *enjoy* (*ſaith he*) *my lands, and that I live in Ieruſalem ſo long as I may not ſee the Kings face?* So if God ſhould give you abundance of all your hearts can wiſh, free you from the fire of hell, yet this will not content you without you ſee his face, if you have this

this love. And thus if Gods people *humble themselves and seeke his face, hee will hear in heaven, and have mercy on them:* when a people are oppressed and in captivity, they may come to the Lord and humble themselves, but for their own liberty, they may seeke their owne good in it, as they, *Howled on their beds for corne, wine, and oyle:* but Gods people seeke his face, his favour; examine thy self then, if when his countenance is clouded, and he hides his face, thou art impatient, thou canst not bear it, then thou mayest assure thy selfe that thou lovest the Lord. Thus did *David Psal.* 51. when he wanted the sense of Gods favour, how

2 Chron. 7.14.

Hos. 7. 14.

how did hee complaine hee would have no deniall, and therefore never gives over intreating til he is answerd.

5 Doeſt thou love the Lord? then thou loveſt the Saints. This is a true and common note, every one hath it in his mouth, 1 *Ioh.* 3. *If you love the Lord, you will love the brethren.* Doſt thou then love the Lord, and hate evill in other men? *If you love not your brother whom you ſee daily, how can ye love the Lord whom ye never ſee?* God is remote from our eyes that we cannot behold him. Now his image is ſtamped upon the Saints, and ſo is viſible to us. We ſee them daily, they converſe with us. Now if we love not them, we cannot love

love God. For the love of Christ is that holy disposition which you conceive in your minde of him: Now the like for kinde is in the Saints. As those that doe the lusts of the Devill, are of his disposition, that is, are as it were little Devils: so in the Saints, there is the same disposition, the same minde that was in Christ Jesus for kinde.

But you will say, I would love them, if I thought they were not hypocrites. *Ob.*

Take heed, thou mayest persecute Christ under the person of an hypocrite: what if thou strike at an hypocrite in seeming? yet a true member of Christ is found wounded by thee. *Sol.*

And

And when thy heart ſhall riſe againſt thee, out of the ſide of the likeneſſe of religion, and true piety, what would you doe if the ſubſtance were there, if he had grace in a higher meaſure? Chriſt pitches on this note above all others. It is farre eaſier to love a holy man then to love God. For he lives amongſt us, we have him continnally before our eyes. Doe not ſay then you love ſuch as are a farre off, you care not for theſe.

Ob. But you will ſay I love them well enough, doe you ſo? Doe you then delight in their company? Are you in your naturall element when you are among them? This you will do by a naturall inſtinct if you love

Sol.

the

the Lord Jeſus. Againe, doe you hate ſinne in all? the ſame ground will cauſe you to hate ſinne, which moves you to love grace. Doe you then hate ſinne as in diſlike, and diſtaſte in regenerate men and their ſociety, be it never ſo pleaſant, ſo profitable? *Ob.* But what would you have me hate men then? no, but hate their ſinnes, and love them with the love of pitty. *Sol.* Let thy heart melt to conſider their caſe, and deſire their good, love them, but ſo as it may ſtand with the love of the Lord Jeſus. Looke then to your ſelves, and examine your ſelves by theſe markes, ſee that you have this love; if ye have it not, you are among the number

number of these men which are to be accursed unto death.

Ob. But I hope I deserve not so bad, my nature I hope is not so vile, as not to love the Lord Jesus.

Sol. Nay, thou hatest him, do you not wish that there were no such Lord to come to judgement, that thou mightest live as thou pleasest? Couldest thou not wish that thou mightest ever here enjoy these pleasures, and never come at him? Now to wish that one were not, what is it but to hate him? *Quem metuunt oderunt:* We say men hate him whom they stand in feare of. Doe you then feare and quake at his comming? surely then you are haters

haters of God. But I hope we are not haters of God. *Ob.*

Why, this is not ſo ſtrange. The Apoſtle tels us that there were ſuch as *loved their pleaſures more then God*, 2 Tim. 3. yea, and that there were *haters of God alſo*. Rom. 1. 30. And in the ſecond commandment God threatens ſuch as *hate him*, Exod. 20. and thou maieſt be one of them. For if you cannot endure his Company, if your heart riſe againſt his image, it is plaine you are a hater of God. *Sol.*

What? you would make me out of love with my ſelfe. What doe you preach damnation to me? it may be all theſe ſignes are not in me; Am I then ſo accurſed? *Ob.*

Yes: we do preach damnation *Sol.*

nation to all that are in such a case, and we are to threaten the curse. And thus the Lord esteemes of thee, and it were good that you thought so of your selves in time. It is the Ministers duty to separate the precious from the vile, to distinguish between men; To shew you truely what your conditions are. Therefore apply this Text unto your selves, every one. If I love not the Lord Jesus, I am an *accursed man*, yea to be had in *execration to the death*, which might make you loath your selves, in dust and ashes. It might make sinne alive in you, and bring you to love this *Iesus*.

FINIS.

The Onely

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Ten Thousand.

Sermon III.

BY

IOHN PRESTON,

D. D.

LONDON,
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SERMON III.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

If any man love not the Lord Iesus Christ, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accurſed unto the death.

NOw becauſe this love is ſo needful, we wil adde more ſignes for the triall of your ſelves. For we cannot be better occupied.

A ſixt ſigne therefore is 6

this,

this, he that loves will be apt to praiſe and ſpeak well of that he loves, and he will exceed in it: yea, he is very glad when he heares others ſpeake well of it. So if we did love the Lord, wee ſhould be apt to ſpeake well of him, we would be much in the ſpeech of him. When the heart is full of this love of God in Chriſt, *out of that abundance in thy heart, thy mouth will ſpeake.* But thou ſpeakeſt but little of God, and that little is brought in by company, thou art cold in thy praiſing of him: why thou doeſt not love him, ſee in *David*, a man that loved the Lord. How much was he in the praiſing of him? nay, he could not be content to doe this alone, but he

he must have all *creatures to praise him and to speake good of his Name:* Even as a servant that commends his master, invites others to serve him. This love *enlarges the heart and opens the mouth. O Corinthians, our hearts are enlarged towards you, and our mouthes are opened,* 2 Corinth. 6. 11. This is an argument that our hearts are enlarged, that we abound in love, when our mouthes are opened. So that thy heart is straightened towards God, if thy mouth be not open to his praises.

But I cannot speake as other men, I am no scholler, if I had elocution, gifts, learning, I could thus speake. *Ob.*

This is no excuse, it is the *Sol.*

nature of love to make men eloquent, the passions make eloquent. As we say, *Pectus facit eloquentes, & magna pars eloquentiæ constat animo.* Are you then apt to speake well of God? But this, you will say, is but a small matter, who doth not? Oh yes, we are wanting in that manner of speaking of him which love requires. We do not speak of him with that affection, that sensiblenesse, that may enflame others to love him. See the Spouse in the Canticles: Oh saith she, *My love is fairer then ten thousands.* And thus will the soule that loves God doe. It will *tell of his mercies abroad.* It will *speake good of his Name.* And that not as a duty onely, but as

as a thing in which it takes eſpeciall delight: Love followes the judgement, you cannot love the Lord, but you will thinke well of him. See then what thy ſpeeches are concerning him: ſee if *thy heart doe nimbly indite, and thy tongue be as the penne of a ready Scribe.* Pſal. 45.

Conſider whether you endeavour to doe any thing for Chriſt without expoſtulating, and indenting with him. Whether you are ready to doe all things freely to him, without conſulting with another about it. *Amicitia non eſt revocanda ad calculos.* A friend muſt not be ſtrict in taking his account, for then he playes but the Huckſter, he doth but buy and ſell. When

thou art trying and expostulating then whether such a duty bee necessary or no, whether another will not serve the turne; this is a sign thou dost want love. A Minister that hath this love, when he is to take a Living, will not so much enquire what reward hee shall have, as what service he may doe to God in it. If you did love the Lord you would not stand, saying, is it necessary to keepe the Lords day so strictly? You would be ready to doe what ever hath but a shadow of pleasing him. Oh how you would be glad of such a day, so free from other businesse, wherein you might sequester your selves from the world, to attend upon

upon God, and to injoy him? So for a family prayer, thou wouldest not aske, can it not be omitted without sin? This questioning will not stand with this love: for the person thou serveſt is the Lord, and thou must not be as a mercenary servant. A wife will bee devising things to please her husband. So *what shall I render to the Lord* (saith *David.*) So *Paul* was *abundant in labours and sufferings.* If *Paul* would have done nothing but out of necessity, he had never done halfe so much. say then I will even go do my duty, performe my taske. If I must pray in my family, then I will: If I must keepe the Lords day, I will make a shift to wear out the day;

This I say argues a heart void of this love. We must know that Christ hath dyed *to purchase to himselfe a people zealous of good workes*; such as doe good workes with desire or deare delight; that would faine doe a great deal more then they doe. Would you then doe no more then just will bring you to heaven as you thinke? Doe you set limits to your performances? you have not this love. Why? you pray that you may serve Christ *on earth as the Angels doe in heaven*, and yet will you say such a man goes faster, it is no matter, this pace will bring me to heaven, and so never mend it? This is a signe of no love to the Lord Jesus.

If

8

If you did love the Lord, ye ſhould finde an holy affection of anger and zeale riſing againſt ſuch as offend him. Anger waits on love. Love is an affection that makes forwards to the thing beloved: and if any thing ſtand in the way, Anger removes it haſtily.

If thy heart then be not ſtirred when God is diſhonoured, his Church ſpoiled, and Religion goes downward, thou loveſt him not, can you endure to heare your ſelfe ſcandalized? No, and why? becauſe you love your ſelfe. To ſee then the blood of the Lord Jeſus trampled on, neglected ſo, as no man ſhould regard it, to ſee the Saints in adverſity, and not

to be affected, argues that your heart is void of this love of the Lord Jesus.

Eli when he heard the newes of *Israels* flight, his sonnes death, it must needs grieve him, but all this while, his heart was composed: But the worst newes (as usually it doth) comes last. The Arke of God was taken: Then his heart was amazed, he could no longer subsist, but he falls downe backward and breakes his necke. But it may be ye doe not hope to attaine to the grace of *Eli*, why looke then on his daughter in law, one of the weaker sex; All that ill newes moved her not so much. Oh the Arke of God was taken, that was it which she pitched upon, her

her ſonne that was borne could not alay this griefe.

But the Arke is not taken (you will ſay) there is not the like cauſe now with us. *Ob.*

Not are not many Churches deſolate? when you ſee ſo many Churches ranſacked beyond the ſeas, do you not ſee the Arke of God taken in a great meaſure? when you ſee Popery increaſing, and the Saints wallowing in their bloud? If you take not this to heart, it is becauſe the love of Chriſt is not in you. *Sol.*

If Chriſt loſe a man, if *any be offended*, and fall away, *I burne*, ſaith the Apoſtle. When the King, *Ier.* 36. tooke that booke and burnt it, it is noted of thoſe that ſtood by, that *they did*

rend their cloathes. God takes it as a great signe of a prophane heart, when one shall not take such dishonours of his to heart, when he rends not his cloathes at the sight of such a thing. *Paul* when he saw the idolatry that abounded in *Athens*, was *enflamed in his spirit.* Acts 17.

See what a commendation God gave to *Phineas* for his zeale against *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, he would have it remembred as a speciall note of his love to him, which he wou'd not let goe unrewarded. If thou dost not then pray for the Churches welfare, If thou art not affected with the l sse and disadvantages of the Church, as with thy owne, thou wanteſt this love.

A ninth ſigne is not to dare to doe any thing that diſpleaſeth him. If you do a thing amiſſe that would be diſpleaſing, you had rather that all the world ſhould ſee you, then him whom you love. Now you know God alwayes beholds you: you ſhould therefore be alwayes alike carefull. *They ſhall feare the Lord and his goodneſſe*, Hoſea 4: The Lord for his goodneſſe; they ſhall feare to loſe him. Above all conſider when you have offended him, how you take that to heart. When you know there is a breach betweene you and the Lord, and you can be content, and reſt in it, this is a ſhrewd ſigne of no love. When man

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man and wife ſhall fall out, and grieve not for it, but let it paſſe, not ſeeking to be reconciled, it is a ſigne of cold love betweene them.

Thinke with your ſelfe there is no man whom you profeſſe to love, but you would not willingly provoke. And dare you ſay that you love the Lord, and yet ye will grieve and vexe him?

If you love the Lord, there would be an hungring in you after him: there would be ſtill an hanging that way. All impediments would be broken through, the heart would ſtill be moving thitherward. It would be tending thither. It would admit no repulſe. As the woman of *Canaan*, *Matth.*

*Matth.*15. it would not be put off. As the stone rests not till it comes to the center, so nothing can keepe you off from the Lord, no pleasures; away with them: nor any difficulties, no you cannot rest without him.

Say not then with your selfe, though you love him not now, yet I may love him hereafter, and I may love him hereafter, though not so much. No, love desires present union, it hates all delayes. Consider this: if you did repent out of love, your repentance would be present, and what repentance is it which is not out of love?

Then hence thou art to humble thy selfe if thou art failing in this labour of love.

Vse 3. To humble our selves for want of this love.

love. See how great a fault it is, not to love the Lord: and learne to blame thy selfe exceedingly for it. And that you may doe this I will shew you what great reason you have to love the Lord.

I The reasons we have to love the Lord.

Consider that *he is worthy to be beloved.* As *David* said, *he is worthy to be praised,* so may we well say, he is worthy to be beloved. And why? becausse he hath all that is amiable in him. If you see any thing lovely in the creature, it is eminently in him. Shall not he that made the eye see? he that made the eare heare? shall not he that gave these perfections to the creatures have them in himselfe more eminently?

This

This perfection of his beauty, is that which causeth the Angels so much to admire and adore him, to be taken up in the admiration of his excellencies. Observe that in any man whom you love; there is something not to be beloved: But CHRIST is wholly delectable, there is nothing in him not fully to be beloved. See how the Spouse describes him in the *Canticles*, how she sets him forth in every part of him most to be desired. If you could but see the Lord. If it did but please him to shew himself unto you as he promised to *shew himself unto him that loves him*, John 14.21. If the Lord, I say, would give you

you a glympse of himselfe; if by the light of the Spirit you could see him, you would acknowledge him worthy of your love. And this is the reason that some love him, and others doe not, because he discovers himselfe to some and not to others. As he did to *Moses*, where let us see a little his expression of himselfe. *The Lord, the Lord,* Exodus 34. this is but the Casket, the Jewell is within. If Gods Spirit should open these words unto you, you would see him the fairest of ten thousand, *Iehovah, Iehovah.* Of every creature (you may say) somewhat it was that it is not and somewhat it is that it will not be. But God is un-

unchangeable *Iehovah*, in him is no alteration, hee is not a friend to day, and none to morrow, and such a friend you would desire to chuse: as this name signifies, his immutable being, so his omnipotency, he is *Almighty*. Now what a Loadstone of love is this? All the power in men enableth them but to doe some things: as patience enables them to beare injurious acts; But the Lord hath all abilities, all ornaments, all excellencies, all is comprehended in this *Almighty*: So that well may such a friend be desired. True, will the poore soule say, he is well worth the having. But he will not match with such a match as I am.

Ob.

Oh

Answ. Oh yes, he is wonderfully *pittifull* and *Mercifull*: as great a Prince of pitty, as of any thing else.

Ob. *Mercifull*: but I have no beauty, no grace in me, no worth, no repentance.

Answ. But God is *exceeding gracious*. Kings are said to be gracious, because there is supposed such a difference betweene them and their Subjects, that they can deserve nothing of them: So *God is gracious*, he doth not looke for any deservings in thee.

Ob. But I have provoked him by sinning, and sinning often: This will make him put me off.

Answ. No, he is *of great forbearance*.

Ob. But if he doe receive me,

I muſt carry my ſelfe well, pray, and doe, that which I ſhall never be able to doe.

Why no, *he is very kinde.* *Anſw.*
Looke what a kinde father, a kinde husband, would doe to a childe, or a wife, they are carefull to give content: the like may you expect of the Lord. He will winke at many infirmities, if your deſires are ſound.

Though he ſay ſo, how ſhal I know *that he will do it?* *Ob.*

To confirme this, *He is true;* he keepes covenant, and hath given enſamples of his mercy on thouſands of them that feare him. *Anſw.*

Oh, but ſtill my ſinnes are many and great. *Ob.*

Be it ſo: yet he *forgives iniquities, tranſgreſſions, and ſinnes*, originall ſinnes, ſinnes of *Anſw.*

of weakneſſe, and ſinnes of wilfulneſſe.

This glory God ſhewed to *Moſes*. This is the deſcription of himſelfe, ſuch a one is Jeſus Chriſt, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, and is he not worthy to be beloved?

2 When thou haſt conſidered the worth that is in himſelfe, conſider that he *ſues to thee for thy love.* Suppoſe a Prince ſhould come and aske this at thy hands, wouldeſt thou deny him? The weake ſhould ſue to the ſtronger, but here the Lord God comes to thee for thy love.

This is that, O Iſrael, which he requires of thee, that thou love the Lord thy God, Deuter. 10: 16. When ſuch a God

God shall aske thy love, sue for it, shall he be denied? We (the Ministers) are but Christs spokes-men to wooe for Christ. See who it is that requires this? it is thy Soveraigne Lord that might have required thee to sacrifice thy children, thy life, thy goods, for his honour, and can hee not have thy love? Now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to feare him, to love him? as if he should say, the Lord hath done great things for you, and might require great things of you againe. This may melt thee then, that he requires nothing but thy love.

Againe consider, he hath planted this love in thy heart: 3

heart: ſhall he not have his owne then when he requires? ſhall not he which planted the tree, eate of the fruit? ſhall not he which gave this fountaine of love taſte of the waters of it?

4 Againe, on whom would you beſtow it, if you will not give it to the Lord? It muſt be beſtowed on ſomewhat, and it is the beſt thing you have to beſtow. It ſwayes and commands all in you. Doth thy wealth deſerve it? Doe men deſerve it? Why, they are not to be compared to the Lord. Can any man doe for thee that which hee doth? beſides, he forgives thee thy ſinnes day by day. Thinke of all his excellencies.

Againe,

Againe, you are engaged to love him: you are married to him; you have given up your names to him in your baptisme: so that now well may I call you *an adulterous generation*, if you love him not, *Ye are witnesses against your selves this day* (saith *Ioshua*) Joshua 24. if ye serve not the Lord. He takes great advantage of their promise that they had made to serve the Lord: ye are now witnesses against your selves if you doe it not. So all that heare me this day are witnesses against themselves. For in their baptisme they tooke the Lord for their God. Is he not your Master? where then is your feare? is he not your father? where then is your reverence 5

reverence? is he not your friend, where then is your love?

6 Againe, he hath bought us, yea, he hath over-bought us. If you ſhould ſee a flocke of ſheepe, and heare that ſuch a man hath paid ſuch a price for them, farre beyond their worth, you will be ready to ſay, let him have them, he is well worthy of them. And ſhall Chriſt be denyed that which he hath ſo dearely bought? he hath bought you from the world, from the power of the Devill, yea, and from your ſelves, ſo that they are not to ſet us on worke, *We are not our owne,* 1 Corinthians 6. we are therefore to doe a mothers buſineſſe, and that is

is Chriſts, who requireth love.

Beſides all theſe generals, thinke of the particulars, which worke moſt upon us. See all his paſſages to you, how kinde he hath been toward you. See how he hath dealt with you from your youth hitherto. Conſider all his kindneſſes beſtowed upon thee: ſee alſo what he hath done in forgiving. Thou haſt ſinned often, and greatly, and yet ſtill he hath forgiven thee, and this is a great matter. *She loved much, becauſe much was forgiven her*, Luke 7. He feeds thee, cloathes thee, thou haſt not a nights reſt but he gives it thee, he it is that keeps thee from all dangers: that careth for thee 7

when thou canſt not take care for thy ſelfe. The creature cannot helpe thee, without he command it to helpe thee, he hath ſtood cloſe to thee in all exigents. And this moſt of all affects us: in ſome great danger when all forſake us, we cannot but love him moſt dearly that then ſticks cloſe unto us. Thus hath the Lord done unto thee, with this *Nathan* urges *David* and aggravates his ſinne. *The Lord hath done thus and thus unto thee, and if that had not beene enough, would have done more.* 2 Sam. 12. 8. Take up the ſame practiſe with your ſoule; the Lord hath done thus and thus for me, and ſhall I not love him? would we not hate that man that

that should not love and respect him from whom he hath his whole maintenance?

Lastly, consider that he loves thee. Now as fire begets fire, so let love beget love. The Sonne of God *hath loved thee and given himselfe for thee*, Galatians 2. Consider Christ hath loved thee, and hath given a good experiment of his love, to wit, himselfe for thee. And if he had given thee himselfe whole, it had beene a gift inestimable: But he hath given thee himselfe broken, *crucified* to thee, who hast been a rebell against him. See his love, he lookes on thee when thou thinkest not of him, he tooke care for thee

8

when thou tookeſt none for thy ſelfe; Nay then thought it he not too much to dye for thy good. Oh the height, the length, the breadth, the depth of the love of Chriſt which paſſes knowledge! you can never know this love of the Lord, it aſtoniſhed *Paul*. Ephes. 3.

All this may ſtirre you up to feare the Lord. This ſhewes you what reaſon you have to doe it; And may be an intentive to you, or at the leaſt may cauſe thee greatly to condemne thy ſelf for not loving him. Let theſe at leaſt make you thinke well of the Lord and ill of thy ſelfe, that you cannot love. It will goe hard if he be refuſed: *his wrath will be kindled*, Pſal. 2. after

after that he hath ſued to thee, and thou rejecteſt him, he will not put it up, but will make his wrath knowen on thee, which GOD forbid.

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FINIS.

The Onely

LOVE,

OR,

The Chiefeſt

OF

Ten Thouſand.

Sermon IV.

BY

IOHN PRESTON,

D. D.

LONDON,
Printed for *Iohn Stafford,*
1640.

SERMON IV.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

If any man love not the Lord Iesus Christ, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accurſed unto the death.

IF it be of ſo much moment to love the LORD, that they are accurſed that love him not, let me exhort you then to doe it. The motive in the Text puts a neceſſity upon the duty, but

Vſe 4. To exhort us to love the Lord.

to draw you on by the cords of love. See what you shall get by it. It might be a strong argument, you shall perish if you doe it not: But let us see the advantages that will come to us by it.

The advantages which arise from the love of the Lord Iesus.

I will make you to keepe Gods commandments with ease and delight: and this is no small benefit. This love makes you goe about the worke, as the ship with winde and saile. The journey must be gone: now they that have not love, must rowe and take a great deal more pains. *This is the love of God, that you keep his commandments. And his commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 3. This makes us keep the commadments

mandments, so ye may fear, you will say. Oh, but love makes them easie. It will be very hard to do them without love. How hard a task had it been for *Paul* to have done so much as he did, without this love! See what love makes mothers do to children. This *love of Christ constrained Paul:* it carried him on like wings; it compelled him to do thus and thus. And is this then nothing? yea, it shall make you *abundant in the work of the Lord.* For this commands all the faculties, and it windes them up to their highest pegs: and this it will make you do out of an inward principle. There is a great difference betwixt a horse that runs freely, and

one

one that is forced by the Spur: Shall not this then cause you to set a high price upon this love?

There are scarse any so desperate, but they would say, they would fain keep GODS commandments, were they not so hard. Now this love will make them thy delight, it will make them easie and pleasant unto thee.

2 This is the surest testimony to your own soul of all others, that *you are translated from death to life.* An hypocrite cannot love the Lord, he may do the outward works, he may hear the Word, and be diligent in his calling. But here is the difference, he doth not this out of love. This is that

that distinguishing character which distinguisheth a Christian; as reason doth a man. If you can finde this love of Christ, this hungring after him, that tendring of the heart towards him, that your heart is to Christ, as the Iron to the Load-stone, you must rest with him. If you can say, I have no great marks of a childe of God, I have many infirmities; but yet this I can say, I love the Lord; my life for thine, thy case is happy; heaven and earth may passe away, but thou canst not misse of thy happinesse. What ever you have without this, can be no sound testimony unto you of your blessednesse; and this alone may secure you of it.

This

3 This love doth make you lose nothing: vvhereas in the loving of other things, the more you bestow, the lesse you have. When thou givest thy heart to God, he gives thee thy heart again, and sets it on work for thy own good; *He teacheth us to profit, and leadeth us by the way which we should go*, Esay 48. 17. As Christ said of the Sabbath, the Sabbath was made for man: so may I say of all the commandments, when you give your hearts to the Lord, he sets them to keep the commandments, but to this end, that it may be vvell with thee. *Oh that there were such a heart in this people, to fear me. and to keep all my commandments, that it might go*

go well with them, and their children for ever, Deuteronomy 5. 20. Thou hast thy heart again, when thou givest it to God. But here is the difference; before, thou wert but an unjust possessor of it, now the Lord hath made thee Steward of it. The Lord hath his own, and you have never a whit the lesse, you have no wrong by it: for he hath given you leave to love your wives, children, and your lawfull recreations, onely now you love them at his appointment, as he will, whereas before you did it as you listed. Nay, the Lord doth not onely give you your heart again, but returns it better than it was, new pointed. As the earth

earth receives in the puddle water, which it sends forth cleer and pure. All the streams of thy love run as fresh for thy good as ever they did, and more. That onely which was amisse in them, is taken away. Let not this feed thy understanding onely, but finde it good in thy practise.

4 By this you shall have much comfort and joy, and this is that which all men desire. What is that which keeps you from loving the Lord? Oh, you have a conceit, that then you must lose your pleasures, and your delights. No, it is the most comfortable action in the world, to love the Lord: delight follows action, as the flame the fire. Now the best

best action hath the greatest delight. The Philosopher could say, Happinesse was to love the most amiable object; *Est amare optimum amabile*, to love the best amiable known, is the best act. *Whom not seeing, yet you love, joying with joy unspeakable and glorious*, 1 Peter 1. It is a pleasant thing to love a creature like thy self, thy wife, thy children, thy friend. But the creature is not perfect, and it may be it loves not thee again. But Christ is perfect, and loves thee, thou canst not lose any love by loving of him. Oh what a pleasant thing it is to love the Lord, to live with him, to sup and dine with him, to be able to say, *I am my welbeloveds, and my wel-*

welbeloved is mine! When you shal consider the world hates you, what a comfort will it be, to know that the Lord loves you! that when the world uses you ill, you may flye unto Christ his bosome, and lay open all your grievances to him. To love, and to be beloved, are the most pleasant actions. Now to love the Lord Jesus, is so much the more pleasant, than the loving of other things, as he is a more excellent object than other things. Besides, is not every thing best in its own place, conformed to its own rule, carried to its own end? Take it in thy body, when all the parts of it are strait, all the faculties and humors in a right temper, serving

to

to their proper ends, then there is delight and comfort: ſo, Love when it is ſetled upon its own object, ſets all things ſtraight, whence wonderful joy cannot but follow, *Amor rectus omnia recta habet*, as the Schoolman well obſerves.

Conſider this, the love of the Lord makes you a better man, gives you a greater excellency, which is a thing which all men deſire. Look on the excellencie of the creatures, it proceeds from their forms; as the excellencie of a Pearl above other ſtones comes from its form: for we know that the matter of all theſe things are common. Now the object to the faculty, hath the property of the forme; for it

it gives name and distinction. Now this love makes God and spirituall things, as it were the form of the will. And according to this form is the excellencie of the man. Every man is better or worse, as his love is pitched on a better object. He that loves a base thing, is base; and he that loves a thing somewhat better, excels that man; but he that loves spirituall things, is the most noble. Look on the lower faculties, when the sensitive appetite enjoys its proper object, then a man hath his perfection in that kinde. Thus, when the will is fixed on Jesus Christ, its best object, then a man hath his full perfection. If water be united to wine, it's made better

better; when the body is united to the soule, how glorious a creature is it! how glorious a creature then will thy soule be, when by love it is united to the Lord! This love puts a greater excellency on the soul, then the soul doth on the body. Love brings the soule to God, and makes him all in all to us; so that what we cannot desire, we may have in him: have ye not then cause to wish that ye loved the Lord? True, you have said enough to enflame us. But how shall we do it my brethren? if you are brought unfainedly to desire it, half the work is done; when the disciples prayed, *Lord increase our faith*: Matthew 18. Christ answers,

Meanes to love the Lord.

swers. If you have faith, but as a graine of Mustard seed, you may say unto this mountaine, be thou moved, and it shall be moved. But this is not the meanes to get faith. No, but this commends faith. And if out of this commendation they could come to prize and admire it, and so pray earnestly for it, God would give it them. Let this therefore be the first meanes to helpe thee to the getting of this, to the *Lord Iesus*.

Mat. 18

1. First pray heartily for it, Lord I desire to love thee, I see thee most amiable, and would faine love thee. This Petition is according to thy will, Lord grant it me.

How would this prevail, how could God put off such a request? But

But I have prayed, and I have not obtained it. *Ob.*

But hast thou prayed importunately, as the woman to the unjust Judge without giving over? This is a precious grace, and therefore God will have us bestow some paines in the getting of it. We shall not obtaine it easily, that so we may prise it the more, and keepe it the more charily. *The grace of Christ*, faith *Paul, was abundant with me in faith and love*, 1 Tim. 11. 14. This is that which the Apostle magnified so much, that God had given him love. The grace of Christ was abundant towards him in giving him love. *Sol.*

But how doth prayer do this? That *Ob.*

Answ. 1. That little love which moved thee to pray, by exercise, is encreased and is become greater.

2 Prayer brings thee in acquaintance with God. Before acquaintance there may be a wishing well to another, but there cannot be that love to another which is required in friendship.

3 And it may be Christ will shew himselfe unto thee, as wee see when hee himselfe, *Math.* 17. *Prayed, his garments were changed, and he was transfigured.*

4 But especially prayer doth this by prevailing with God, as we see the prayers of the blinde man prevailed with Christ. And do you think that Christ now in heaven hath put off these kinde affections

ctions which he had on the earth? will he not also hear, if you should pray to him?

Ob. But this you will say is a common meanes to obtaine all grace.

Ans. Yes: but of this love in a speciall manner: because love is the most peculiar gift of the holy Ghost. Now the holy Ghost is obtained by prayer. Our hearts are so carnal, so fleshly, that wee cannot love the Lord, and he is so holy, so good, that we can no more love him, unlesse he himselfe kindle this flame of love in our hearts, then cold water can heat, unlesse it had another principle. Contend therefore and strive with the Lord for his Spirit which works this

Col. 1.8 love, who hath *declared also unto us your love in the spirit.*

Secondly, desire the Lord to shew you himselfe, that Jesus Christ would manifest himselfe unto you. And this is the greatest meanes of all, to work love. He *that hath my commandements, and keepeth them, is he that loveth me, and he shall be loved of the Father, and I will love him, and shew my selfe unto him*, when Christ shall shew himself to you, when he shall open the clouds and let you see his beauty, his glory, Oh then you cannot but love him.

John 14. 21.

There is a great difference betwixt the Ministers shewing of you Christ, and his excellencies, and the holy Ghosts. Though wee could

could speake with the tongue of Angels, yet it would be but as the dead letter to Christs shewing of himselfe. When he shall shew you your vilenesse, his excellency, your sinfulnesse, his holinesse, your misery, his mercies, you must needs love him. *Paul* when he had revealed Christ, what he could to the Ephesians, he prayes for them, that *God would give them the Spirit of wisdome and revelation*, Ephesians 1. 18. As who should say, the labour is all lost, if you should see no more than I preach. You love not a man till you know him your self; the LORD shewed himselfe to *Moses*, *David*, *Paul*, which made them love him

so much. Go therefore to the Lord, and pray as *Moses*, *Lord shew me thy glory*; and beg it earnestly at his hands: and that which was done extraordinarily, shall be done to thy soul. That was but a shewing of the Lord by a right light, which is done more or lesse to every one.

Ob. But this is an act of the Lord, what shall I doe to it?

Sol. Consider what the Scripture sayes of him, what the Saints say of him, but most of all what he hath been to thee. See with what patience, love, and mercy, he hath carried himselfe towards thee, as when we converse with a man, out of his severall actions we gather his disposition, and so

frame

frame an Idea of him in our minde.

We must humble our selves, labour to see our miserable conditions for that will bring love. So *Paul* when hee considered that hee was the worst of all, It made him love more then them all. So *Mary* when she conceived how unfit she was to conceive by the holy Ghost, she sung that song. When we looke on our selves, and see our owne sinnes and miseries, our love to Christ will be encreased. When a man shall have a true apprehension of himselfe and his misery, and can expect nothing but death and damnation, and then Christ should come and say no. But he

3

shall live: this wounds a mans heart with love. Looke on your secret sins, your relapses, your misery by sinne, and then on Christs comming with his mercies and favours, and you cannot but love him. I say looke on thy sinnes, weigh them with their circumstances. Think that *after so many adulteries* comitted against Christ, yet that he should say, *If you will come in, yet will I receive you*, this might shake thee and melt thy heart. He that loveth not the Lord, sees not his misery, nor that good hee hath by him.

Ier. 3. 2.

4 Strengthen thy faith: for the stronger thy faith is, the greater will thy love be. A strong hand rids more worke

worke then a weake. Take a man excellent in all gifts whom thou much admireſt, yet if he loved not thee, thou wouldeſt not much care for ſuch an one: ſo though thou ſeeſt much excellency in Chriſt, yet thou canſt not love him unleſſe thou haſt a perſwaſion that he loves thee. But how ſhall I know that hee will love me? he hath made it known that he is thine, and that he is willing to become thy familiar friend; God hath given him in mariage to thee. *To us a child is born, to us a ſon is given.* And Chriſt himſelfe hath ſhewn ſufficiently his love unto thee. He hath ſpent his blood for thee, yea, he continually ſpeakes to his Father in thy Eſay 9.

behalfe, yea, he sues to thee for love, he loves thee first, and sues to thee, as the man doth to the woman; Thou mayest be perswaded therefore that he loves thee.

Ob. But I am not fit to be a Spouse to Christ.

Ans. It is true, and he knew that well enough. He will take thee a Blackamore, and afterwards *will put beauty on thee*, Ezekiel 36. and 16. Stand not thou on thy unfitnesse when he is thy Sutor.

Ob. But it may be he stands thus and thus affected to such and such persons, and how shall I know that the Lord loves me and is willing to take me?

Ans. I can say nothing to thee but this, and that is sufficient, thou hast his generall promise

promise made to all, *Marke 16. Goe preach the Gospell to every creature.* There is a generall mandate given to Ministers to preach the promise to all, and why wilt thou make exceptiõs where God hath made none, and enterline his promises? We are commanded to offer Christ to all, every one that will come may come and drinke of this water of life freely. The offer is generall, though but some imbrace it.

But I want godly sorrow for my sinnes. And this is required before we can receive Christ. *Ob.*

Yet deceive not thy self, the matter is not whether thy humiliation be more or lesse, onely come. The pro- *Answ.*

misse is made to all that come, they shall be refreshed. Indeed thou wilt not come till thou art somewhat humbled, Thou wilt not flie to the citie of refuge till thou art pursued by the avenger of blood. But if thou come at all, God will fulfill his promise. Sticke not so much on the degree of thy humiliatiō. Take a man that hath committed high treason, for which he is condemned and brought to the place of execution, ready to suffer, but then there is a pardon offered him: And take another guilty of the same fact, but as yet not condemned, and bring him a pardon, he is even as joyfull as the other, for he saw his case was even as bad

bad, onely it was not so far gone, and he hath not lived so long in sorrow. So some mens sinnes are grosser, and their sorrow more violent, other sinnes are lesse, but yet such as they see them like to damne them, they therefore are humbled as truly, though not so violently. Therefore though thou hast not had so much sorrow as others, nor felt those terrours of the Almighty, yet if thou hast so much as will bring thee to Christ, and make thee sticke close unto him, so as thou wouldest not leave him for any thing in the world; it is enough, thou shalt have him. Why then stick you? what hinders your faith? The impediments must be on

on Gods part, or on your part: But it is not on Gods part, for his promise is full, and large, most free; neither is there any on thy part, for there is nothing required in thee, for which he shall set his love upon thee. There are no merits desired on thy part, onely accept him, receive him, he will afterwards put some lines upon thee. Art thou willing to take Christ for thy husband, for better and worse, with a crowne of thorres, as well as glory, then the match is concluded, thou mayest be sure that Christ will be thine.

Ob. But I have renewed my sinnes, and have fallen into divers relapses. I still provoke him and fall backe, and God

God will not endure such a wretch.

Yet he forgives sinnes of all sorts, he is *abundant in mercy*, he is still forgiving, and never gives over. There is a *fountaine opened to Iudah and Ierusalem for sinne and for uncleanesse*, Zachary 12. verse 13. There is a fountaine, not a cisterne, to wash in, which may bee drawne dry. Onely this caveat must be put in, that we allow not our selves in any knowne sinne, but that we maintaine warre continually against sinne. And by no meanes admit any peace with *Amaleck*. *Answ.*

Another meanes is, to remove the impediments of love which are two especially, *strangenesse*, and *worldly-* 5

ly-mindednesse. Strangenesse dissolves all friendship. By this meanes the intereſt of friendship may be broken off. This ſtrangeneſſe breeds fearefulneſſe when we go to God, and fearfulneſſe weakneſſe of love: wheras boldneſſe is the nurſe of it. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we have boldneſſe in the day of the Lord Ieſus.* As by neglecting fellowſhip with the Saints, we come to loſe our acquaintance we had towards them: ſo the neglecting of maintaining our acquaintance with GOD, brings us quite at laſt to leave him. Draw neere therefore to God continually, and this will encreaſe your love to him. Be therefore oft ſpeaking to him and hearing

hearing him ſpeake to you.

Be much in prayer, and often in reading and hearing. And doe not theſe things cuſtomarily, and untowardly, but with life and affection: goe to prayer as you would goe to ſpeake with your moſt dear friend, whom you moſt of all delight to talke with. Let it be pleaſant to thee to converſe with him in all things, when thou haſt any injury befallen thee, goe and māke thy cauſe knowne to him; and when any ſinne hath eſcaped thee, whereby hee may be offended, give not over till reconciliation bee made, and thy friendſhip rewarded. Looke eſpecially to thy wayes, for ſinne alienates and reſtraines a

man

man from God: therefore see that that be removed as much as may be.

2 Worldly mindednesse also hinders the love of God. This is the uncircumcision of the heart. Hence is that, the Lord thy God will *circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy soule, and with all thy heart, that thou mayest live.* And untill the heart be circumcised, it is filled with the love of the world, so that he cannot love the Lord, at least, with all his heart, as he ought.

There is no such quench-coale to the love of God, as the love of the world. Pleasures and the love of carnall things are very apt to

to ſteale away our hearts from God before we are aware. If we looke not more narrowly to it, they may doe it. Examine your owne hearts, and ſee if by how much the more you love the world, by ſo much the leſſe you are affected to the Lord. Theſe things as *Abſalom*, ſteale away our hearts from God, as he did the people from his Father. If thou findeſt not that love to God, which formerly hath beene, ſee what hath come betweene God and thy heart. Looke if ſome pleaſure or luſt have not crept in betweene: for theſe will ſeparate between God and thee. See if there be not in thy underſtanding conceits of things to be bet-

ter

ter then indeed they are: for these will turne the heart from the Lord, but above all looke to thy will and affections.

FINIS.

THE

The Onely LOVE, OR, The Chiefest OF Ten Thousand.

Sermon V.

BY
IOHN PRESTON,
D. D.

LONDON,
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1640.

The Only LOVE: The Chiefest

SERMON V.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

If any man love not the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accurſed unto the death.

NOw the next thing we have to do, is to ſhew what kinde of love the Lord accepts, for he will not take any kinde of love that is offered him, but onely ſuch a love as he cals for, as he requires.

Thou

Thou must love him with all thy might, and with all thy strength. A publique person may doe more then a private. His example may doe much, or he may command others, if not to doe good, yet to refraine from evill.

God desires that thou love him with all thy strength; if thou knowest much, thou must doe much. Besides some things thou canst do, namely, which others cannot doe without great difficulty. As some men are temperate, some patient by nature. If thou art such an one, God requires more of thee then of another, for he accounts that which thou canst doe, without setting thy might to it, as nothing.

It

It is not enough for thee to love the Lord, but thou must love him with thy might. The might of a rich man, of a Magistrate, of a Scholler, or whatsoever thou art, when thou shalt come to the Lord with a small pittance, when thou hast opportunity to do a great deale more, the Lord will not take it at thy hands. As a Landlord will not receive a small parcell when the Tenant may pay a greater sum. Neither is this a thing indifferent, for you to do, or not to do: for *God requires much of him, to whom he hath given much.* Hee gives us all talents which he puts as prizes in our hands, which he expects we should lay out according

as we have received. *Paul* did no work of supererogation, though he was *abounding in the workes of the Lord*, continually setting himselfe about the worke with his whole strength.

2 Thou must love him above all things else. Above all creatures, above that which is most deere unto thee, yea, above thy selfe. And if thou doest not so, thou lovest him but as a creature which will not serve his turne. He hath done more for thee then any creature hath or can do. He hath died for thee, hee hath given himselfe crucified for thee, hee deserves therefore more love then thy pleasures, profits, or then any friend thou hast.

You

You are therefore to love him above all, to embrace and cleave to him chiefly, to make him wholly thine.

But how can he (you will say) be wholly mine, seeing so many have their parts in him? *Ob.*

Yes, he is wholly thine, and thou must be wholly his. He is infinite, and so hath no parts, but is entire to every one, as every line drawne to the Center, may challenge the whole Center for it's owne, though there be a thousand lines beside. *Answ.*

But what? must I so love the Lord, that I may not love earthly things? *Ob.*

Yes: thou mayest love them, so that it be not with an adulterous love. Thou *Answ.*

mayeſt love thē for God, as by thē you may be enabled to ſerve God the better.

Ob. But how ſhall I know this adulterous love?

Anſw. When you love any thing, ſo as it leſſens your love to your husband, that is an adulterous love. As when thou loveſt ſome pleaſure and delight ſo, as it takes up the minde and hinders thee in hearing, and will not ſuffer thee to pray without diſtraction, but thy thoughts muſt be upon it, this love is adulterate love. Thou mayeſt rejoyce, yet ſo as if thou rejoyceſt not. As this joy hinders not thy walking with God, ſo thou mayeſt labour in thy calling with a love to it, yet ſo as it doth not draw away thy

thy heart from God.

But this is very difficult (some will say.) *Ob.*

No it is easie. When God hath put this love into thy heart, the necessity of it may make it easie. Thou mayest do it, or thou canst not be saved. Indeed it is impossible for a man that hath set his heart on riches, to remove it off againe of himselfe. And in this sense Christ speakes, when he sayes, *It is so hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdome of heaven.* But when God hath wrought this love in thee, and hath revealed to thee, the emptinesse and vanity of other things, it will be easie. *Ans.*

But I am not able to love the Lord above my *Ob.*

ſelfe and all other things.

Anſw. Yes, thou mayeſt, if once thou art throughly perſwaded that he is thy chiefeſt good, and how miſerable thou art without him: thou wilt then be content to forſake all, and to cleave to him alone. A man that ſowes corne is content that it ſhould die ſo as it may be quickned again and bring forth encreaſe. And therefore *Paul*, though he ſaw the outward building of his body go to decay, he cared not, ſo long as he *was renewed in the inner*. So when thou ſeeſt thy good conteined in him more then in thy ſelfe, when thou ſeeſt thy happineſſe laid up in him, thou wilt eaſily be perſwaded to leave thy ſelf

to

to enjoy him: for thou loſeſt nothing by loſing thy ſelfe, thy whole happineſſe is in God.

Againe, thou muſt be 3
rooted and grounded in love. This is that which the Apoſtle ſo prayes for, for the Epheſians, *Epheſians* 3. 17. There is a certaine love by fits which God accepts not. When men come and offer to God great promiſes like waves of the Sea, as bigge as mountaines, oh they thinke they will doe much for God. But their mindes change, and they become as thoſe high waves, which at laſt fall levell with the other waters? If a man ſhould proffer thee great kindeneſſes, and thou ſhouldeſt afterwards come to him to

make use of him, and he should look strangely upon thee, as if he were never acquainted with thee, how wouldest thou esteeme of such love! If we are now on, now off in our love, God will not esteeme of such love, and if you be not rooted in your love, you will be unstable. Let then your love be well rooted, let the foundation be good on which it stands: now that is on two things.

1 Wherein grounded love doth stand.

This love must be *founded in faith*. Therefore *Ephesians* 3. when the Apostle had prayed that they might be strengthened in faith, he addes this also, that they *might be grounded* in love. When thou art once rooted in faith, thou shalt be

be grounded in love. When therefore you come to beleeve, and consider whether Jesus Christ belong to you, or no, Doe it not overly and slightly, but doe it throughly. Sift every thing to the bran, give not over till thou art fully satisfied, till thou canst answer all objections, and rest in this perswasion, that all is most true which hath bin revealed to thee of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is good for thee to rest upon it.

2 Your love must be built upon his person. If you love his, and not him, you will be unstable in your love. If thou lovest him in his person, thou changest not, for thy love will be constant. But if thou love

him for that he hath done for thee, becauſe he hath done thee much good, and given thee many favours, and tokens of his love, and kept thee from many troubles, when he changes his dealing towards thee, thou wilt change thy love to him. Thou wilt not then doe as Iob, receive good from the hand of the Lord, and alſo evill. Put caſe God ſhould take all from thee, and ſend one affliction in the necke of another, this will try thy love, whether in this caſe thou wilt ſticke cloſe unto him. Sometimes God hides his face from his children, and *writes bitter things againſt them*: if then thou canſt love him, thy love is on his perſon, a con-

constant love.

Another condition of our love is, that *it must be diligent*. The Apostle commends the Thessalonians *effectuall faith and diligent love*, 1 *Thessalonians* 1.3. If if you say you love the Lord, and yet will doe nothing for him, you have not that love which God accepts. This love is operative, diligent, and not idle, and dead. We regard not a dead drugge, a dead plant, we cut it up and cast it away: even so doth the Lord esteem of a dead love, and love that shewes not it's life, it's diligence to obey God. This love will cause thee to put on new aparrell, to adorn thy life so, as thy love may take delight in thee. 4

thee. This will make thee carefull to beautifie thy self with the graces of the Spirit. See therefore whether thy love prepare thee for Christ. This love doth that which *John Baptist* did. It prepares men for the receiving of the Lord. If thou wilt come then before him in thy old garments, it is a signe thou lovest him not. Againe, the operativenesse of it, is seene in opening thy heart to him, when he offers himself unto thee. This will give thee a capable heart to entertain him, that he may dwell plentefully in thee. This doth

Ephes. 3. make thee *comprehend with all Saints, what is the height, and bredth, and length, and depth of the love of Christ.*

This

This love is diligent in cleansing the heart, that it will suffer nothing to remaine there that may be offensive to the Lord God that dwels with his people. This love therefore will suffer no sluttish corner to remaine in the heart, but keepes all cleane. *It clenses a man from all filthinesse of flesh and Spirit*, 2 Corinthians 7.

Lastly, the diligence of love is seene in keeping of his commandments. If thou doest nothing for the Lord, thou lovest him not. So much love as thou hast, so much care will there be in thee to doe his will; so much fire, so much heat to stir for his glory: So much love, so much desire to walk

in

in perfect obedience before him.

The object on whom our love must be set.

And now we come to the object upon whom our love must be placed, *The Lord Iesus.* Consider whom it is, whom, if you love not, I pronounce you thus accursed. It is the Lord Jesus, he is your Lord, your Prince, your Saviour, your Messias, your Prophet, so that he which loves him not, is worthy to be accursed.

First, he is *our Lord.* Now, to run from an ordinary Master is punishable to rebell against an ordinary King deserves death but he is more, our Lord and King in a more speciall bond. Besides, that he hath made us, and preserves us, we are his by purchase, and he hath bought

bought us deere, he hath shed his blood for us: so that he that will not love this Lord, let him be accursed.

Thirdly, againe he is our Saviour, and in this respect love is now more due to God, then in time of innocency. When *Adam* broke the Covenant and made shipwrack, Christ offers himselfe a Saviour. Now, if we will not receive him, there is no more hope. He is the *secunda tabula*, left to us after shipwracke, which if we let goe, we cannot escape eternall destruction. 3.

Lastly, he is our Prophet, *that Messias, John 4.* which *tels us all things.* That great Prophet whom *Moses* foretold, whom if we believe not

not, we must be for ever accursed. The time of our ignorance God regarded not, but now he will have an eye to us, after that the light hath shone unto us, & he hath revealed himselfe, when this our Prophet hath come unto us and shewen himselfe unto us. Now God claimes our love: and if now we refuse to love him, and to come in unto him, we are rebels. Yea, he is our *Priest*, and would reconcile God unto us. Yea, he is made unto us a *King*, to subdue our lusts and rebellious affections, to draw us to himselfe, as it were by force: So that now if we love him not, wee deserve the curse. Now marke, the Lord hath joyned these two

two together, *the Lord Iesus*. We must take heed that we separate them not. And we must see that we take him not onely as a Saviour, but also as a Lord. He is not onely the Authour of the remission of our sinnes, but he is our Lord to rule us. The preaching of the Gospel is nothing but the offering of Christ, his whole person, and so you must take him: as a Subject to be your Lord, as a Spouse to be ruled and guided by him, and then we shall have the benefit which arises thence. We are willing to part with the sweet, but we will have none of the sower: as that young man would have had Christ, but he would not part with his wealth for him.

him. But Christ tels him that he must either part with him or them. Canst thou be content to fare as I doe? to be rejected and scorned in the world as I am? then well and good, thou mayest follow me, but otherwise thou canst not. And if thou art content to do thus, to suffer persecution, and to forgoe all for him, thou shalt have him, and all the benefits that come by him; if not, thou art not worthy of him: he that beleeves not the Lord Jesus, is condemned already. i.e. He that takes him not when he is offred, is in the state of condemnation. We must see therefore that we take his whole person, as he is a *Lord*, as well

well as he is a *Saviour*, and not the latter without the former. *If any man love not the Lord Iesus, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accursed to the death.* The Apostle curses such as love him not, with a double curse. He expresses it in two languages. They are men set a part to evill, appointed to destruction; as some men are set a part to good, so are these to evill. They are shut up in prison, such as God hath set himselfe against. His eyes are continually upon them for evill. Thus shall he be accursed that loves not the *Lord Iesus*. There shall be a curse on his soule, *for matter of grace*, that as Christ cursed the figtree, when he came

Of the curse of those that love not the Lord Iesus.

came and found no fruit upon it, *never fruit grow more on thee and it withered away:* So when Christ is offered, and this Gospel preached, and thou refusest this grace, thou mayest find Christ so curse thee, that thou be ever barren in the matter of grace. And if perhaps thou thinkest this no great matter, the curse goes further. Thou shalt be cursed *from the presence of the Lord.* Thou shalt have no part nor portion in the light sweetnesse and comfort, of his favour. And this *Caine* tooke to heart, though hee were a wicked man, and had before but Gods common favour: and so *Saul* was exceedingly cast down, when as God would not answer him

him by any of thoſe uſuall meanes: but is this ſuch a matter to be excluded from his preſence? yea, and at the time of death you ſhall find it ſomwhat, yea in troubles you ſhall ſee it a dreadfull thing (as they did) to want him to ſtand your friend. As *Saul* did, though in his proſperity he little regarded it, yet when the Philiſtines came upon him, he was driven to his wits end, becauſe the Lord would not anſwer him. But theſe are but ſpirituall things, I feele them not, you will ſay. But yet the curſe goes further, *You ſhall be curſed alſo from the earth*, that is, from earthly comforts, which it yeelds to others. Now thou ſhalt beſtow all thy travell and pain

pain upon it, and be never the better for it.

Ob. But many a man receives him not, and yet is not thus accurſed.

Anſ. Indeed we ſee it not many times, and it may be, the time of execution is not yet come. Thou mayeſt have *Cains* priviledge, though thou art accurſed, that no ſhall kill thee preſently: thou mayeſt enjoy thy health and wealth, and no man lay hold on thee here to hurt thee. But thou art reſerved to a more ſolemne day of puniſhment. And yet the curſe goes a ſtep further, thou ſhalt *be curſed eternally*. But that thou wilt ſay, is a great way off; and you need not feare it yet. But conſider what eternity

is,

is, what thoſe dayes of darkneſſe will be, when the Sun of comfort ſhall ſet, & never riſe again upon thee. When it ſhall be always perfect night, and never day. When God ſhall open all the treaſures of his wrath, and powr them with full fury upon thee, when the ſtorme of vengeance ſhall never be blowne over, but thou ſhalt be overwhelmed in the midſt of all miſery, as the old world was in the deluge.

If this be the caſe of men that refuſe, yea that love not the Lord, then take heed to your ſelves. Wee the Miniſters offer you Chriſt when we preach, and you ſit negligently before us, minding other things, not

Vſe.

not caring to take the Lord. Take heed: this is your portion to be thus accurſed. The Goſpel hath two parts: if you take Chriſt, you ſhall be happy, you ſhall be ſaved. But if you will not love him and imbrace him, you ſhall be damned. Therefore think not that there is nothing but hony in it: yea there is a ſting that followes it, if it be neglected: Miniſters are not to goe a begging in offering the Goſpel, but are as Ambaſſadors of the Lord of Heaven. If men will receive our meſſage, ſo it is, otherwiſe the duſt which we ſhake off from our feet, ſhall be a witneſſe againſt you, that ſo God will ſhake you off. God will not have his

his Gospel refused, his Son despised; and therefore he counsels us, to *kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and we perish all in his wrath*, Psa m 2. Though he be a Lamb, and have behaved himself meekly amongst us, yet if we provoke him, we shall know that he can shew himself a Lyon. If he be not intertained in the still voice, he will come in fire, in a wind that shall rend the rocks in sunder. Thus he describes himself, *One that hath feet like burning brass, out of whose mouth proceeds a fiery sword*, Revelation 1. *Moses* went first to *Mount Gerizim*, to blesse the people; and if that would not move them, he go's up to *Mount Ebal*, and thence

curſes them: ſo the Apoſtle before exhorts and perſwades them to the love of Chriſt; but if they will not imbrace him on fair terms, he tels them what ſhall follow, they muſt be accurſed.

Ob. But what if I take not the Lord at this inſtant? I hope this curſe will not befall me:

Sol. It is true, we cannot ſay ſo; for while this time laſts, we are ſtill commanded to offer Chriſt; yet there will come a time, when there will come forth a Decree which ſhall never be revoked. Take heed therefore, for this is very dangerous. The Lord will not ſuffer his Goſpel to be abuſed, or neglected; when once the Husbandmen refuſed the Son,

Son, they were presently *cast out of the vineyard*, Matthew 21. This offends God more than any sin that we can commit. To refuse Christ offered, is worse than drunkenesse, theft, adultery, or the like, which men count the grossest sins. *My people would none of me, therefore I gave them up to their own hearts lusts.* This refusing him, made him swear that they should never enter into his rest. As the Gospel offers greater favour than the Law; so, *swifter damnation* attends the neglect of it. My brethren, take heed *that you receive not the grace of God in vain.* While it is called to day, *harden not your hearts*; yea, take heed of refusing it

now. For, you know not whether this offer may ever be made you again; and if it be, thou knowest not whether thou shalt have the grace to receive it, or no. Know, that the same Gospel *is a savour of life unto life*, to such as receive it; but unto the others, *of death unto everlasting death.*

Ob. But the Gospel is continued still.

Answ. It is true: but how many are there that live in the congregation, and are never a whit the better, though they hear the Word daily, because by the contempt of it, it becomes the savour of death to them, and their hearts are hardned, so that they shall never receive good by it.

FINIS.

Good READER, if thou wilt see the reaches of a devout soule after this love of *Christ*, expressed in these pious Sermons, read this Soliloquy following.

A SOLILOQVY OF A DEVOVT Soul to CHRIST, panting after the love of the LORD JESUS.

THou Love of all loves, thou chiefest of ten thousand; thou lovedst me before I was, thou dost love me when I am, thou doest love me (if I be thine) when

I am here no more. *Thy Loves are better then wine*, but mine are worse then gall, and wormewood. Thou loveſt me who deſerve leſſe then nothing, I love not thee who deſerveſt more then all things. I have hid my ſelf frō thee as *Adam*, yet thou haſt *pierced through the dark cloud*, and loved me. Thou haſt opened thy ſelf in the face of my ſoul, yet in the ſight of this Sun I have not loved thee. No baſeneſſe of mine hath cloſed thy eyes, & kept thy heart from me: yet every baſe pleaſure, and pleaſing luſt hath kept my heart and eye from thee. Without my love to thee I cannot have my happineſſe *applyed*, and *enjoyed*. It is

Faith

Faith that marries thee to me: but this faith must *worke by love*, or my marriage will end in a fruitlesse barrennesse, and faithlesse separation. Hitherto therefore I have loved thee, but *for lust*, not *for love*. I would have thee save me, but I would not honour, and please thee. I can thus think of my disloyalty towards thee; but thou knowest it before I thought it, and more then I can speake or thinke. Thou deest *thinke thoughts of love and peace to me*, but I minde the abuse of thy love, and the too late repentance of thee *upon my owne termes*. How can I be acceptable to thee, (*My Love, my Dove, my undefiled,*) Thou spreadest out

thy hands, and art ready for *blessing me*: but if I open my head, heart, hand, I am apt to receive nothing but *Anathema*, *Maranatha* from thee. Can love come to enmity, heaven to hell? I am hell (*my Lord*) thou art heaven: I am hatred, thou art Love. Thou *shewest hatred*, yet in my *wisdome am I very enmity*. Can I then expect either to have the *blessing* of Love, or to avoide the *curse* of not loving? *Oh shew me thy face for it is comely*. Thou hast often shewed mee thy riches, and I have loved them; but oh shew me thy selfe that I may love thee. I have seen thy goodnesse, mercy, compassion, merit, salvation, and have cryed out,

out, (*My blessed Iesus*) make these mine. Now let me see thy selfe, that thou *my beloved may bee mine*, and all those riches in thee. From the sight of thy riches I have desired to preserve my selfe: from seeing thy selfe I shall desire to draw neere to thee, and to cleave to thee for ever. O thou whom my soule desires to love, *shew me then where thou liest at noone*, that I may see thee: I know where I shall finde thee at the night of my life. I shall finde thee sitting on yonder throne, ready to say, either *Come ye blessed*, or *Goe ye cursed*. I do not know whether so short a view shall bring me to heare either the one, or the other. Shew me

me then where thou lieſt *at this my noon.* Now thy Sun doth ſhine upon this my tabernacle, and I have ſome time to behold thy beauty, that I may be in love with thy perſon: where then ſhal I find thee? if I look to *mount Tabor*, I ſee thee in glory, & I cannot but love thee for that. If I look *to the garden*, I ſee thee lying on the cold ground, ſweating *drops of blood* for me, and I cannot but love thee for that. If I looke to Golgotha, I ſee thee nayled *to the Croſſe*, and thy heart broached that I may drinke thy blood and live, and I cannot but love thee for that. If I looke to *mount Olivet*, I ſee thee aſcending *farre above all heavens*, and I cannot but love thee for that alſo. Indeed

in *Tabor* thou hadst visible glory, but it soone vanished. In the *Garden* and *Golgotha*, thou hadst *little* visible *beauty why I should desire thee:* and in *Olivet*, thou wast quite carried out of my sight. If then thou liest for me no where else, what hope have I to love thee, O thou to be beloved of all. Art thou not in the tents of the Shepherds? Dost thou not walk *in the midst of the golden Candlesticks?* Doest thou not *dwell in the hearts* of men by faith? Oh let me see thee here below, in the Church, in my selfe. Let thy glory goe before me, that I may love thee for ever, and ever, and be blessed in thee. Thou hast a long time been manifested

to

to me in thy natures, offices, and markes for me, and these draw me to love thee. Thou hast beene crucified before my eyes, and the vertues of it have beene cleared by the Ministery of the Word, and Sacraments. I have heard and seene the *promises*, *signes*, and *seales* of thy dearest love, and these might allure me to love thee. But (*O thou chiefest of ten thousand*) why hast thou kept thy selfe at such a distance? why hast thou not beene *formed in me*? why hast thou not *dwelt in me* that I might see in thee the glories, and vertues, of thy life, death, resurrection, ascention, and to be *sicke of love*? Thou hast *stood and knocks* at the doore of my

un

unworthy heart for this end. Thou wouldest have come *in and supped with me*, after the noon-nine of the Gospel, with thine owne banquet. But, alas, there was no roome for thee, because I desired first to feast it out with the base guests of sinfull lusts, before I would give thee entertainment. The cause hath been in my selfe that I have not beene better acquainted with thee, and so, that I have not loved thee. O wretched soule that I am, *who shall deliver me* from being an enemy to my selfe! I have *bowed my knees to the Father* of thee, the Lord Jesus, that he would grant to me, according to the riches of his glory, that I may have his

assistance to empty my selfe of all my wicked guests, that thou mayest come in to me, and I may have the better list and leasure to contemplate thy glory, and be grounded in thy love, O my blessed *Lord Iesus*. Could I but get this, my gaines would be unspeakeable. Whatsoever thou *commandest would be sweet*, because I love thee. If I could give thee my heart, thou wouldst give it better to me againe: for no uncleane thing can come out of thy hands. But (O my desired love) I have denied thee; therefore, I deny selfe. I have rejected thee; therefore, I reject my selfe. Doe with me as thou wilt, onely first love me, and

and let me answer thee with love againe. And why should not I be confident to be heard in this, seeing thou (*my love*) *sittest at the right hand of God making request for me.* Speak thou the word, and thy poor servant shall love thee Say to my soule, *My Father hath heard thy prayer*, and then, *I will love thee dearely*, My *Lord Iesus.* If I love thee, I live: If I love thee not, I perish under a fearefull curse for evermore. And shall it be thus with me, O thou that *wilt not the death of poore sinners*, who pant after thee? No, no, thy merits and intercession have prevailed with my God. I finde the filth of domineering sinne, in some measure, washed from

from the windowes of my ſoule, that the beames of thy glory may pierce it, and and draw my love after thee. Now do I begin *to be ſicke of love*, and earneſtly deſire thy company here, *by grace*, and hereafter *by glory*. I love to heare thee ſpeak (*let me heare thy voice for it is ſweet*) and to ſpeake to others of thee, and thy beauties. Thou haſt made mee ſomething willing to doe, and to ſuffer any thing for thee, *Lord perfect this good worke*. If I ſee the meaneſt perſons like thee in thy goodneſſe, *My delight is in them* I, love them the better for thy ſake. I dare not wilfully anger thee, and *my ſoule is vexed* with them that doe it.

it. Thus the pulses of my soule (by thy blessing) doe begin to beat after thee. But (alas) when I consider how weake I am in thy love to thee my *Saviour*: whē I find a thousand things creep in betwixt thee and home, and steale my heart away from thee! when I feele how easily I am diverted from thee and thy service, what comfort can my poore soul have now? *O my Lord Jesus*, thou wilt not leave thy owne work, and suffer *thy tender plant to wither away*! when thou hast sowed thy seed, hast thou not prepared the former and latter raine? *Shall I not be able to doe this through him that loveth thee and me?* I may not run from thy love, *thou art my Lord*,

Lord. I dare not, *thou art my Iesus*. If thou live, let mee know thy love to me. If I live, let me feele my love to thee. Oh *shed it more in my heart*, that as in beleeving in thee *my person* is justified, so in loving thee *my faith* may be justified, and in having *faith working by love*, I may so constantly walke in thy presence, that with comfort I may sing with the Bride, *Come Lord Iesus, come quickly*, Even so, Amen.

FINIS.